

A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY INDIAN MYSTIC

*Dadu and His Followers*

The waking sleep and the sleepers sleep till God's mercy they  
discern;  
The waking wake and the sleepers wake when His blessed name  
they learn.  
They that see are blind and the blind are blind until the truth is  
known;  
They that see behold and the blind behold when they make God's  
love their own.  
They that speak are dumb and the dumb are dumb till the secret  
comes abroad;  
The speakers speak and the dumb too speak when they lift their  
hearts to God.  
They that live are dead and the dead are dead till they behold His  
face;  
The living live and the dead too live in God their Dwelling Place.

DADU, *Song 307.*

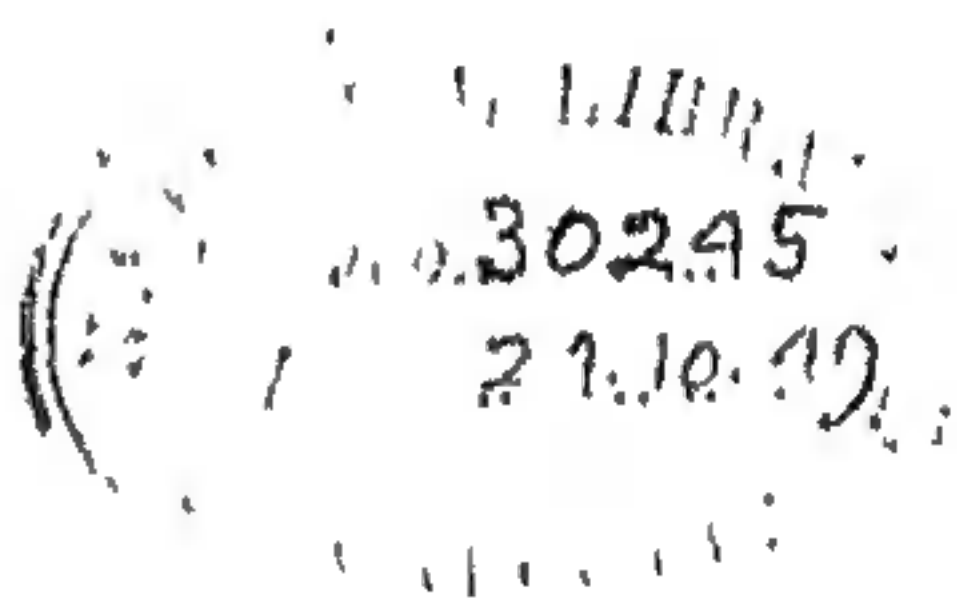
A  
SIXTEENTH-CENTURY  
INDIAN MYSTIC

by

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*With a Foreword by*  
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### Foreword

DR. ORR has asked me to furnish for his study of Dadu a brief introductory note on the general characteristics of what is called *bhakti*, and on its possibilities as a tradition which may enter the Christian Church and bear fruit there.

*Bhakti* is the accepted designation of a type of religion which has had a long history in India alongside of the prevailing monism of philosophical Hinduism. It is primarily a devotional attitude rather than a theory and seeks a religious fellowship with a God recognised as able to enter into personal relations with men. In the *Bhagavadgita*, *bhakti* receives for the first time its formal recognition as within the pale of Hindu orthodoxy. That recognition gave a prestige to what had been—and what, indeed, still remains—a religion for the common people, providing it with a secure doctrinal foundation and thus enabling it to extend its influence widely within India and far beyond its borders.

But it is not with the influence of *bhakti* as a system of ideas that I am concerned here, but with the *bhakti* saints and poets who have sung their message through the centuries in every region of India and with the religious character of their utterances. The God whom these saints worship is a God whom they can think of as loving them and to whom they can give love in return and give it sometimes with an abandon that proves morally perilous. The name of the God of their devotion may be Rama or Krishna or Vithoba; it may even be Siva, alien as this dread god may seem to be from the more gracious gods of the Vaishnavite pantheon. The power of what is essentially the devotion of a loving heart is sometimes so strong that it establishes in the worshipper what we may call a provisional monotheism. So far did this go in the case of Kabir that when he died he is said to have been claimed by both the Hindus and the Muslims while Nanak, the Sikh *guru*, said of himself, "I am neither Hindu nor Muhammadan but a worshipper of the Formless".

Accompanying the warmth of their devotion there is also to be found among the adherents of *bhakti* a sense of fellowship



which breaks down—even if only temporarily—the barriers of caste and raises the status of woman. “Even they that be born of sin” (i.e. women and the lower classes of the sacred order), says the *Bhagavadgita*, “come to the supreme path”, through devotion to Krishna. And so we find among the *bhakti* singers women like Mirabai, the Rajput princess, on the one hand, and like the Kashmiri beggar woman, Lal Ded or Janabai, a servant woman in the household of Namdeva, the tailor, on the other. The fellowship of the saints is more precious to Tukaram than any bliss of Nirvana, and so he prays, “Hear my cry, O God, do not grant me *moksha*”, (that is, absorption into *brahman*). When he says that it is his kinship with those who sing praise to God that fills his life with blessedness, does it not seem as if he had obtained some glimpse of the Church and of the Kingdom of God?

These cries of longing echo across India, north and south, and east and west, from Gujerat to Bengal, from Kashmir to the land of the Tamils. They are embodied alike in the arguments of Tulsi Das’s *Ramayana* and in the ecstatic songs of the Alwars, “wandering singers, mad after God”. Common to them all is the desire of their hearts for the divine fellowship. The rain bird’s shrill note seems to them the very voice of their spiritual craving; in the wild swans winging their way to the horizon they see the *homo desideriorum* seeking his far off home in God; the lost and frightened fawn in the wide and desolate jungle is a picture of the soul’s plight in an “empty world”. Narrow as their outlook on the universe may appear to us, monotonous as its expression must be with so limited a range of music, these poets have in their possession the eternal theme of poetry. Rabindranath Tagore is a true representative of their tradition when he says, “It is the sorrow of separation that ever melts and flows in song through my poet’s heart”. And still that cry comes to us today with its pathos and appeal—above all other clamours—across the plains of India.

If these experiences have been a reality to those in whose hearts the “loving faith” of *bhakti* has awakened, surely we must say that the living God was near them. “The seeker”, Oliver Cromwell said, “is the next best sect to the finder.” Such a conviction answers our second question as to whether *bhakti* is a

tradition which may enter the Christian Church and bear fruit there. The founders of the theistic Samajes, men like M. G. Ranade and Sir Ramakrishna Bhandarkar, nourished their spiritual life daily on the psalms of Namdeva and Tukaram, and they, we may certainly say, were not far from the Kingdom of God. T. R. Glover has suggested that some of these *voces clamantium* might well be mistaken for hymns by Madame Guyon. If the mood that inspired them expresses a deep sense of man's need of God and a sense of the world's "emptiness" (as one of them says) apart from Him, then who need fear to be in their company? When an Indian bishop is moved to deep emotion as he tells of the *bhakti* symbol of the human seeker as a lost child in the throng of an Indian fair crying for its mother, he is indeed leading his hearers by an Indian road to Christ. Few Christian Indians have done more for the Christian Church than Narayan Vaman Tilak did for his Maratha fellow Christians when he gave them out of his *bhakti* heritage a great body of songs that are not foreign echoes, but voices from the deepest places in their own Indian hearts. Tilak stands at "the place of fulfilment of craving" and there the *bhakta's* cry of desire is transformed to a song of thanksgiving. The Christians of India have begun to build their own Church desiring that, while the foundation of the building shall be Indian car. Among its stones there should ion of the *bhakti* saints.

NICOL MACNICOL.



## Preface

THE life and teaching of Dadu cannot fail to be of interest to the student of Indian religion. Few *bhakti* writers have, I believe, approached more nearly to a true ethical monotheism. Seldom, perhaps for this reason, is one more deeply conscious than in the study of Dadu's poems of the limits imposed by traditional Hindu thought on the development of a real philosophy of theism.

For the majority of readers the main interest of the story of Dadu will be found simply in its value as a human document. Of the lofty aims by which he was inspired little remains, save in obscure byways and out-of-the-way corners, in the life of the modern Dadu Panth. But in many ways, direct and indirect, his influence survives. Dadu was greater than the cult which bears his name. It is the personality of the man which gives to his message its permanent worth and dignity.

Unfortunately, Dadu is still practically unknown to Western readers. An article on "Dadu" contributed by the late Rev. John Traill to the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* is almost the only readily available source of information on the subject. Further work projected by Mr. Traill was interrupted by his death in 1909.

No English translation of the *Bānī* of Dadu has yet been published. A free rendering of two short sections appeared many years ago in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (vi, 484). In 1929 was published in India (Theosophical Society, Benares), an attractive little volume under the title *Psalms of Dadu*, containing a translation by the late Rai Bahadur Tara Dutt Gairola, B.A., LL.B., of about a hundred hymns, of which several are quoted in the following pages.

As one main object of this book is to introduce the *Bānī* to English readers, I have thought it desirable to devote as much space as possible to direct quotation. A complete chapter is given to representative selections, and the chapter on Dadu's teaching is illustrated by quotations throughout. Except when otherwise stated, the translations are my own. The numerous quotations from Kabir are either taken direct from, or





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based on, the Rev. Ahmad Shah's English version of the *Bijak*, or Macauliffe's rendering of the *Ādi-Granth* (*Sikh Religion*, vol. vi).

It is impossible to make individual mention of all who have helped in the preparation of this book. I regret that my acknowledgments must in so many cases take the form of a belated tribute to the memory of departed friends. To Mr. Traill I owe my first introduction to the works of Dadu, and to the late Professor J. N. Farquhar the suggestion to undertake the present study. Special acknowledgment is due to the late Purohit Hari Narayan, B.A., Vidyabhushan, of Jaipur, for his generosity in placing at my service, not only his valuable collection of Hindi manuscript volumes, but also the fruits of his own patient study and research. Special reference should be made also to the late Qazi Gulam Nabi of Sambhar, whose family records place beyond doubt the identity of Dadu's early teacher, Buddhan, and also throw much light on the relations of Buddhan's successors with the Mahants of Naraina. In this expression of thanks I would include the Qazi's son, Mr. Sirajan<sup>\*</sup> Nabi, who gave much help in the tracking down of certain useful historical documents. Another valued helper was the late Baba Buddh Ram, of the Ram Snehi order, to whose wide knowledge of the modern ramification of Hindu sects I am indebted for many clues to the obscure and mostly unwritten history of the armed ascetics.

Among members of the Panth, I cherish a grateful memory of the unfailing kindness of the late Mahant Chandan Das of Niwai, head of the Jaipur Nagas, to whom I never applied in vain for information, oral or documentary, to aid me in my study. To Sadhu Kripa Ram of Bhiwani, Sadhu Mangal Das of Bikanir, and Sadhu Sadanand—all representatives of the younger and more progressive element in the Panth—I desire to express my gratitude for all the willing help they have given me. I welcome this opportunity of putting on record my warm appreciation of the courtesy and helpfulness of members of the Panth generally during my many years of friendly contact with them. My deepest debt of all is perhaps to the countless unnamed helpers met in quiet retreats, at crowded fairs, or by the dusty roadside, whose human friendliness has helped me to



understand, as no mere academic study could do, the daily atmosphere in which Dadu lived and worked.

It only remains to record my grateful sense of Dr. Macnicol's kindness in writing the Foreword, and to state that the author is alone responsible for the opinions expressed in this book.

W. G. O.



### *Note on the Spelling of Hindi Words*

FOR the sake of the general reader, I have tried to avoid too frequent a use of Hindi words when English equivalents are available. For the same reason, a sparing use has been made of diacritical signs. As a rule the pronunciation of a Hindi word is indicated on its first appearance in the text, and thereafter only occasionally when for any reason it seems desirable. Utility rather than precise uniformity has been my primary aim in the transliteration of Hindi words and names. Thus, words from the Sanskrit like *karma*, *avatāra*, *saṃsāra*, etc. (pronounced *karm*, *avatār*, *saṃsār* in modern Hindi prose) are given in the form in which they can be most easily recognised, and as actually spoken in several of the vernaculars. The same rule is followed in the case of names such as Rāma, Shiva, Indra, Yama, etc., the names of famous writers and teachers like Shankarāchārya, Rāmānanda, etc., and the titles of well-known books, like the *Rāmāyana* or the *Bhaktamāla*. On the other hand, most proper names, such as Nām Dev, Sundar Dās, Jan Gopāl, etc., as well as a large number of Hindi words in common use, like *panth* (sect), *maṭh* (monastery), etc., are spelt as spoken in Hindi, and as spoken and written in Urdu.

A word may be added on the pronunciation of the constantly recurring "Dādī Panth". Both vowels in "Dādī" are long, as in the English words "far" and "soon". The consonants are strongly dental, being pronounced with the tongue on the extreme tip of the upper teeth. In "Panth" the vowel is short, having the sound of *a* in "America", or of *u* in "cup". The *t* is distinctly aspirated, as in the English compound "hot-house". (Tempting assonances with words like "panther" should be avoided.) The English word "punt" provides a tolerable approximation for the non-linguistic reader.



### *Note on the English Rendering of Divine Names*

DADU uses ■ great variety of names for God, often with little distinction of meaning. But some differentiation is obviously called for. The general rules followed in the translations are briefly indicated.

1. Very frequently the names *Parameshvara* (Supreme God) and *Paramātmā* (Supreme Spirit), as well as the (Persian) *Khudā*, are rendered simply "God".

2. The names *Sāṁ* (for *Gusāṁ*, literally "Lord of Cattle"), *Bhagwān*, *Hari* (occasionally), as well as the (Persian) *Khudāwand*, are ordinarily rendered "Lord"; and *Swāmī*, *Sāhib*, *Mālik* and several others as "Master" or "Lord".

3. Names with a more definite connotation, like *Srijanahāra* (Creator), *Kartā* (Doer or Disposer), the Arabic *Rahīm* (The Merciful), and very many more, are rendered by corresponding descriptive titles.

4. The names *Rāma*, *Govinda*, *Mādhava*, *Hari* (generally) and many others, used by Dadu *only* of the Supreme Being, are retained in their original form, to indicate as clearly as possible their sectarian origin. The same rule has been followed in the case of the Hindu *Brahma* (final *a* short) and the Arabic *Allāh*.

5. Other names like *Brahmā* (final *a* long), *Vishnu*, *Shiva*, *Rudra*, *Shesha*, etc., all appellations of Hindu deities, *are never used by Dadu of the Supreme Being*. These names also are retained unchanged.

The sense in which each name is used can be seen at once from the context.

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## Chapter One

### THE AGE OF AKBAR

DADU, from whom the Dādī Panth, or Way of Dadu, derives its name, was a contemporary of Akbar, the Great Moghul. The reign of Akbar (A.D. 1556-1605) was the most brilliant in the history of Muhammadan rule in India. In many ways unlike our own Elizabethan era, with which it synchronises, it has some points of resemblance to it. It was a time of enterprise and adventure, of vigorous intellectual movement and exuberant self-expression in literature and art.

Under the despotic rule of a foreign emperor there is indeed nothing quite comparable to the growth of national self-consciousness which we associate with the corresponding period in the West. But the masterful genius of Akbar did give to the many heterogeneous elements of which his empire was composed a unity and cohesion they had never possessed before. The peoples and kingdoms brought under his sovereignty entered on a period of rest and security such as they had seldom enjoyed under their warring Hindu or Muslim rulers. The roads were comparatively safe for travel, and there was much coming and going among the people of the various provinces. The *urdu* or "camp" language—the precursor of modern Hindustani—was in process of formation, facilitating commercial and social intercourse, and bringing Hindu and Muslim into closer contact with one another.

For all his lust of conquest, Akbar had less of the character of the mere military adventurer than any of his predecessors on the throne of Hindustan. Formally illiterate, he was a man of wide general culture and large and liberal ideas, many of them far in advance of the age in which he lived. In two important respects the policy of Akbar marked a departure from that of former Muslim rulers. In the first place, he had the sagacity to see that a foreign domination, resting on the mere military subjection of a conquered people, had no promise of permanence in it. He was the first of India's Muhammadan

conquerors, if not to conceive, at least to set clearly before him as a practical ideal, the creation of a truly indigenous Indian Empire, thoroughly autocratic in character no doubt, but rooted in the respect and confidence of a loyal and contented people. Secondly, in pursuance of this far-sighted policy, the idea—and even the pretext—of a “Muslim conquest” of India was definitely abandoned. Religious persecution was brought to an end. The hated *jizya* or poll-tax on unbelievers was abolished, as well ■ the tax on Hindu pilgrims to sacred places; and the policy of admitting Hindus, on equal terms with Muslims, to the highest offices of State was inaugurated. It would be too much to assume that in every case the imperial orders were fully carried out both in the letter and in the spirit. But the declared policy of the court, and the dread of the Emperor’s displeasure, imposed a wholesome restraint on the proselytising zeal of local officials.

The warlike Rajput kingdoms, which had offered so determined a resistance to the Muhammadan invader, were early brought into relations with the rising Moghul power. Akbar’s plan was to enlist the services of the Rajput princes in his own cause, thus converting ■ formidable obstacle in the path of his ambitious designs into a main instrument for their fulfilment. He proposed to enter into honourable alliances with the several ruling chiefs, the bargain to be cemented in each case by the gift of a Rajput princess to the Emperor in marriage. From Akbar’s point of view, the terms offered were not ungenerous. In return for their recognition of Akbar as overlord, the Rajput rulers were to be secured in the possession of their hereditary rank and territories. They were to be given posts in the imperial service worthy of their station, and carrying with them emoluments more than sufficient to restore their broken fortunes. Above all, the star of Akbar was clearly in the ascendant and the hopes of resistance small. The bitterest drop in the cup of their humiliation was the proposed royal marriages. The practice was continued just as long as Akbar and his immediate successors were in a position to enforce it, and is to this day regarded ■ a deep stain on the family honour of the Rajput clans which were compelled to acquiesce in it.

It was the fate of the Rajput kingdom of Dhundhār (now

Jaipur), the main scene of Dadu's labours, to lie directly in the path of the advancing Moghul armies, and it is not surprising that the Rajas of Amber, the former capital, were the first to come to terms. Raja Bihār Mal (1547-73), less from love of the Moghul than from fear and hatred of the ruling dynasty, had already followed the fortunes of Akbar's grandfather Bābar, and for a time of his father, Humāyun. When in 1562 the Emperor visited Rajputana on a pilgrimage to Ajmer, the Raja waited upon him at Dausa, not far from the modern city of Jaipur, and presented his eldest daughter (destined to be the mother of the Emperor Jahāngir) in marriage. Bihar Mal's heir and successor, Bhagwān Das, who had already entered the imperial service, became a trusted and devoted servant of the Emperor. Bhagwan Das's nephew and adopted son, Mān Singh, rose to still higher honours, and is one of the most prominent figures in the later history of Akbar's reign.

The example of the ruler of Amber was soon followed by other Rajput princes, with the notable exception of the Rānās of Mewār (Ūdaipur), whose proud boast it is that the blood of their noble race has never been mingled with that of their Muslim conquerors. The tragic story of the heroic defence and fall of Chitor, and the ruthless harrying of the country of Mewar by the armies of Akbar and his successor Jahangir, afford the clearest evidence of what the rejection of the Emperor's flattering overtures involved. With the betrayal in 1569 of the all but impregnable fortress of Ranthambhor, on the southern border, Rajput resistance was virtually at an end, and the Rajput principalities became part of the new imperial provinces of Ajmer and Agra.

But Akbar was not only a soldier and statesman. He was an idealist, a mystic, a dreamer of dreams as well. It is easy to dismiss his interest in religion as a matter of mere intellectual curiosity or far-sighted policy, but a careful study of his religious history hardly bears out this conclusion. In the case of so enigmatic a character, it is by no means easy to determine what was its dominant interest. There can at least be little doubt that it was in the character of mystic and dreamer, sitting loose to the pomp and pageantry of life even ■ he mingled with it, and ever seeking to draw aside the veil behind which the



ultimate truth lay hidden, that Akbar was wont to discern his own features most clearly.

In the new eclectic faith he sought to introduce the political motive is certainly prominent. Without the bond of a common faith uniting the peoples of his wide empire, as his experience of sectarian hatred and intolerance had taught him, all else he had attempted must finally go to pieces. No one ever believed more firmly in the divine right of kings. As the cult of later Rome centred in the worship of the Emperor as its visible principle of unity, so Akbar in the zenith of his power was prepared to claim for himself honours little, if at all, short of divine. But the faith so expressed, to fulfil its object, must embrace the essential truth of all religions. It was to the discovery of this essential truth that Akbar devoted so much anxious thought and study with, it must be confessed, disappointing results. The "Divine Faith" of Akbar was in truth the dream of a statesman rather than of a seer. It was an attempt to raise the principle of religious tolerance to the dignity of a creed. As far as it reflected Akbar's own views on religion it was an expression of mental bewilderment rather than of religious faith. It was this that reduced to absurdity the Emperor's claim to spiritual leadership of the new cult. The "Divine Religion" had no intelligible creed save the affirmation of personal devotion to the Emperor. Plain men like Raja Bhagwan Das and Raja Man Singh were genuinely at a loss to know what the new religion was to which their adherence was invited, and Akbar was equally at a loss to inform them. Only as it culminated in the worship of the Emperor, as Akbar was well aware, had the "Divine Faith" any claim to be regarded as a religion, and on that delicate question a haze of ambiguity was discreetly allowed to rest.

Akbar's Universal Religion never commanded any considerable following. Raja Birbal, the friend and confidant of the Emperor, was the only prominent Hindu who is known to have identified himself with it. The place assigned to Akbar as high-priest of the new cult was an offence, not only to orthodox Hindu and Muhammadan sentiment, but to the religious sense of many earnest souls who, in response to the spirit of the times, were feeling after a common basis of fellowship resting on a more solid foundation than ■■■ imperial edict.



But if the "Divine Faith" failed of its purpose—the establishment of a common religion which would bind the diverse races and peoples of India into one—Akbar's enlightened rule went far to undo the harm wrought by his predecessors, and to promote a better understanding between his Hindu and Muslim subjects.

## Chapter Two

### THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

WHAT Akbar's "Divine Faith" sought, but conspicuously failed to achieve, others were attempting in a deeper and more spiritual way. The devotional revival which had swept over northern India in the two preceding centuries was not yet wholly spent. The teaching of Nāṁdev in the Maratha country, of Rāmānanda and his famous disciple Kabīr in the North, and of Chaitanya in Bengal (to mention only a few outstanding names) had come as a message of life to many whom the philosophy of the schools on the one hand, and a lifeless ceremonial on the other, had left hungry and dissatisfied. The keynote of the movement was *bhakti*—fervent devotion. The great bulk of its adherents were drawn from the humbler ranks of society. Its message was for rich and poor, high caste and low, learned and unlearned; and its language was not the classical Sanskrit, but the common vernacular. It was essentially ■ religion of grace. For the arduous path of knowledge, and the hardly less arduous path of good works, it substituted the way of simple trust in and devotion to a gracious and loving God, who accepted the worship of the heart. The adoption of a medium of expression intelligible to the common people had an immense influence in spreading the teaching of the *bhakti* cults, and broadening their appeal.

Among the followers of the way of *bhakti* there was from the first a remarkable community of ideas. The special object of worship of each sect, and even its peculiar tenets, would seem to have been largely an accident of its historical origin. The whole emphasis was, not on formal systems of belief, but on the direct experience of God attained through the practice of devotion. Religious ideas and images passed with remarkable freedom from one school, and from one dialect, to another, and became part of the common heritage. A new religious terminology grew up, and in course of time a whole devotional literature in which, apart from a difference of names, the

teaching of one sect is practically indistinguishable from that of another.

Along one line of development indeed, from the fourteenth century onwards, there came to bear on this movement, distinctively Hindu in spirit and origin, a new and powerful influence. This was the monotheistic teaching of Islam. The successive waves of Muhammadan conquest had two important results for Indian theology. The proselytising zeal of the Muslim invaders, resulting in the merciless slaughter or forcible conversion of multitudes of defenceless Hindus, could not but provoke a strong Hindu reaction. For a time indeed it may well have seemed as though the advancing tide must carry all before it. But within organised Hinduism, along with much that was effete and doomed to perish, was a solid body of conviction against which the waves of persecution broke in vain. So remarkable is the rise and spread of the *bhakti* cults throughout this whole period that one is tempted to regard religious persecution as one of the main contributing causes. Formalism and superstition were driven to the wall, but vital religion survived. The sudden, amazing outburst of Hindu art and literature, as of a pent-up torrent, under the liberal rule of Akbar is a further proof of the great vitality of which the Hindu religion was still possessed.

Not less far-reaching in its effects on Hindu thought and life was another influence of a very different character. Throughout the period of Muslim domination, and side by side with much active persecution, a quiet but effective propaganda by methods of peaceful persuasion was being carried on by numbers of devoted Muslim missionaries, whose activities were largely independent of the political movements of their time. To the labours of these apostles of Islam, men of saintly character not a few of them, whose names are still held in reverence to-day by Hindu and Muhammadan alike, is to be traced in no small measure the gradual spread of Islamic ideas in northern India, frequently resulting in genuine conversions to the Muslim faith even in the darkest times of oppression. There were no doubt strong worldly inducements to embrace the religion of the conquerors, but justice has not always been done to the operation of more spiritual forces in the spread of Islam in India.



Professor T. W. Arnold, in his *Preaching of Islam*, goes so far as to suggest that, but for Aurangzeb's unfortunate change of policy, the whole populace of India would in time have been brought within the fold of Islam. This is certainly an overstatement. Even if such a process of silent absorption were at all consonant with the genius of Islam—the "best" Muslim rulers, like the "best" Roman Emperors, were too often the worst persecutors—the forces of conservative Hinduism were much too strong to allow of any such bloodless revolution. It is abundantly clear that the effect of Muslim tolerance, as exemplified in the statesmanlike policy of Akbar, was in the main to encourage the Hindu sects to strike their roots yet deeper into the soil of Indian life.

What might reasonably have been expected, had the policy of Akbar been followed by Aurangzeb and his successors, was an insensible modification of Hindu thought (such a process had already begun) in the direction of monotheism, accompanied by a progressive absorption of the Islamic faith (or all that survived of it) into the ever-plastic fabric of Hinduism. It is something like the initial stages of such a process of assimilation that we see, not only in the "Divine Faith" of Akbar, but in many of the most serious religious movements of the time. Eclecticism was in the air. It was not only the fashion of the court. It was the channel in which the thoughts of many devout people, weary of sectarian strife, naturally flowed. From the fourteenth century onwards there had been a growing fraternisation between the saints and mystics of Hinduism and Islam. The Hindu devotee and the Muslim mystic had from the first much in common: there were no such profound doctrinal differences as separate the orthodox Hindu from the orthodox Musalman. To the quest of a common ground on which devout seekers of both communities could meet a great impetus was given, in the latter half of the fifteenth century, by the teaching and example of Kabir, whose name is a household word throughout the towns and villages of northern India. The movement may be said to have reached its climax in the age of Akbar. That Hindu conservatism and Muhammadan bigotry were still forces to be reckoned with is unmistakably clear from the records of the period. All the more significant is this "fellowship

of the saints" in the sixteenth century to which there is nothing quite analogous in the life of modern India. For a brief moment, albeit within a strictly limited circle, the dream of Hindu-Muslim unity seemed almost on the eve of being realised.

That a Muhammadan of humble birth should be acknowledged as the spiritual head of what is to-day an exclusively Hindu order is in itself a striking evidence of the genuineness of the effort, more than three centuries ago, to bridge the gulf between Hindu and Musalman. It is at the same time a sad commentary on the unstable equilibrium of a system that, in its passion for unity, fails to take account of things that differ, and is content to find the doctrine of the Qurān in the Vedānta, and the philosophy of the Vedānta in the Qurān.

## Chapter Three

### THE LIFE OF DADU IN TRADITION

BEFORE entering on a critical study of our main sources of information regarding the life of Dadu, it will be convenient to have before us in some fullness of detail the traditional story now generally current among his followers. The narrative that follows is based almost entirely on a little work entitled *The Life Story of Dadu*,<sup>1</sup> believed to have been written by a disciple, Jan Gopāl, shortly after Dadu's death. The fact that this poem has undergone considerable revision at the hands of later editors hardly detracts from its value for our present purpose, though some of the more extravagant later additions have been ignored. Nothing further need be said by way of preface, except to remind the reader that an incident is not necessarily unhistorical because it has come down to us in the garb of legend. To attempt at this distance of time to present the story of Dadu's life carefully purged of all legendary features would be to rob it, not only of much of its human interest, but of something of its historical value as well. Much will be found in the traditional story that is conventional, or merely trivial. In their eagerness to enhance the glory of their master, Dadu's disciples have sometimes failed to do justice to the spiritual greatness of the man. At the same time the author, or authors, of these personal reminiscences have to some extent succeeded in giving us a living portrait of the Guru they knew and loved. The memory of his words and acts was still fresh in the minds of his followers when these early records were put together. And, while the story has undergone many transformations in the course of its passage from lip to lip and from pen to pen, enough remains of its original setting to help us to understand something of the deep impression Dadu made on the men of his generation, and the passionate devotion he kindled in the hearts of many earnest disciples. Through the mist of three centuries and more we are still able to discern the features, not only of a zealous

<sup>1</sup> *Dādā Janmālā*.

religious reformer, but of a singularly gifted and lovable personality.

#### BIRTH, CHILDHOOD, AND ILLUMINATION

Lodi Ram,<sup>1</sup> a merchant of Ahmedabad, earnestly desired to have a son. He was assiduous in the performance of his religious duties, and in his attendance on holy men. One day a stranger appeared in the guise of a religious mendicant, and bade him go next morning at daybreak to the banks of the Saraswati River (on which Ahmedabad stands), assuring him that his prayer was granted and that he would receive a son who would bring salvation to many. On reaching the river next morning, the merchant was surprised to see a crate or basket floating downstream and finally coming to rest near the spot where he stood. In it lay a beautiful, smiling infant. Lodi took the child in his arms and carried it to his home. His wife was overjoyed. As she clasped the child to her breast the needed sustenance was miraculously provided, and from that day she nursed the child as her own.

When Dadu was eleven years old he was one day playing with some companions when an aged mendicant appeared and asked for alms. Alarmed at his stern appearance, the other children turned and fled, but Dadu was not afraid. Running indoors, he presently returned with a small coin which he offered to the old man. The latter then asked him to fetch some *pān* (a preparation of areca nut, for chewing), and this also Dadu did, preparing the *bīṛā*, or folded leaf, with his own hands. Placing a morsel of the *pan* in the boy's mouth the ascetic laid his hand upon his head and proceeded to instruct him in divine truth. Dadu, in his childish innocence, failed to recognise his divine teacher, and only imperfectly understood what he had said. But "what God gives none can take away", and the meeting marked a turning point in his life.

Seven years later, when he had reached the age of eighteen, Dadu was granted a second vision. He was now told he must leave the seclusion of his home, and make known to others the truth revealed to him. From this time he completely abandoned the world and gave himself up to a life of prayer and meditation.

<sup>1</sup> The name is not given in Jan Gopal's poem. It occurs in the later literature.



His days were spent in the society of devout men, and in the performing of deeds of mercy. Finally, he left home for good, and for the next six years led the life of a wandering ascetic in the "midland country" between Gujerat and Rajputana. At the age of twenty-five he took up his abode in Sambhar, an important town on the shores of the famous Salt Lake of that name, in the Moghul province of Ajmer.

#### AT SAMBHAR

In Sāmbhar Dadu's manner of life, no less than his teaching, soon began to attract attention. He scorned to wear the garb of the professional devotee, but his love, and the yearning of his heart for God, grew day by day. He would sit for hours in a state of spiritual rapture, beholding the "hidden light" and feasting his soul on its ever-expanding glories. His heterodox opinions gave offence to both Hindus and Muhammadans, but he was never at a loss for an answer to his critics. He belonged to no sect or party, disregarded all caste distinctions, and condemned idolatry, fasts and pilgrimages. He had many encounters with the local authorities, and was subjected to much petty persecution. A Muhammadan magistrate of Ajmer came to Sambhar to try his powers of persuasion or intimidation. "How comes it", he asked, "that with the Sacred Book in your hand you thus pervert the way of truth? He that speaks of God as 'Ram' is no better than an infidel." To which Dadu replied: "Consider, O Qazi. The Musalman upholds his own religion. The Hindu is equally zealous for his. Tell me, I pray, what religion God favours. What godliness is there, for example, in the slaughter of one's fellow creatures? Is not the whole world hastening to destruction?" Incensed by these words, the Qazi so far forgot himself as to give Dadu a blow on the face with his fist. The saint retained his composure, and merely expressed his regret for the toughness of his body and any pain it might have caused. The Qazi withdrew in confusion. Before he reached home his hand began to ache. A few months later he died in great pain.<sup>1</sup>

One day, through the machinations of his enemies, Dadu's

<sup>1</sup> A flagrant instance of a good story spoiled in the telling.



life was threatened by a rogue elephant. The people fled in all directions: Dadu alone remained unmoved. "The creature is maddened by illusion, while I drink continually of the nectar of God's love. Why then, should I fear?" As it drew near, the elephant suddenly stopped. It then came forward and reverently touched his feet, bowing its head and allowing the saint to put his hand upon it.

Dadu's growing popularity began to prove a serious embarrassment to himself. At all hours people flocked to see and converse with him, and his private devotions were much interrupted. He decided to choose an occupation that would provide ample opportunity for quiet meditation, and at the same time a plausible pretext for dismissing importunate visitors. He became a carder of cotton. For two or three days at a time he would work at his "bow" almost without interruption, pausing only for needed rest or to partake of a frugal "mendicant's portion". One day a woman brought a *ser* (2 lb.) of cotton to be carded, which she falsely represented as two *ser*s. On getting back the cotton, she weighed it and in affected surprise hurried to the house of the "Gujerāṭī Swāmī" to inform him that he had not returned the full amount. Dadu assured her that he had given back ~~exactly~~ what he received, and suggested that she should go home and weigh it again. On doing this she was amazed to discover that it actually weighed two *ser*s. Once more she hastened back to beg Dadu to accept the extra *ser* of which she had tried to defraud him, but Dadu would have none of it. "Take it home, mother; the cotton is yours, not mine." As regards its chief object, the experiment proved a failure. Dadu's attempt to play the part of an obscure cotton-carder was as unconvincing as Kabir's appearance in public, from similar motives, in the company of a notorious harlot. His true character could not be hid, but only shone out the more clearly.

On one occasion a thief broke into his house. The rustling of the leaves of a book he encountered in his search awoke some disciples who were in the apartment. They called out, but received no answer. Dadu, by this time awake, was heard begging the intruder to be gone in all haste lest, the alarm having been raised, he should be caught and punished. Such was the kindness of his heart.

Seven years after his arrival in Sambhar, Dadu's eldest son was born. The story is as follows. His wife was eager to have children. The saint, divining the longing of her heart, gave her two cloves and two peppercorns to eat, with the promise that she would become the mother of four children. In due course Garīb was born, followed by a second son, Miskīn, and lastly by two daughters, Hawwā (Eve) and Shabbo.<sup>1</sup> As Sanaka and his brethren were produced by Brahma, and Kamal by Kabir, so through the power of meditation were these children born to Dadu.<sup>2</sup>

In the later years of his residence at Sambhar Dadu won some notable converts. Two of these, Banwārī Dās, the reputed founder of the *uttarādha* or "northern" section of the Dadu Panth, and Hari Dās, also a prominent leader in after years, came from the Panjab. A Muslim officer of State, Buland Khān, a former persecutor, also joined the ranks of Dadu's supporters. Certain hymns sung by Dadu had given offence to the Muhammadans. He was waylaid and violently assaulted, but betrayed no signs of agitation. His spirit had detached itself from the body, ■ the dead cast off their earthly vestment. He was dragged before Buland Khan, who had him locked in an underground cell, but the singing continued and his captors returned to see that their prisoner was secure. To their amazement, they discovered two forms of Dadu, one seated without and one within the cell, contentedly singing the praises of his Lord. Buland Khan's eyes were opened and from that day his enmity ceased.

#### AT AMBER

For some time Dadu's thoughts had been turning in the direction of Amber. At the age of thirty-five he left Sambhar, which had been his home for ten years, to take up his residence there. His fame had preceded him and he received ■ warm welcome from the ruler, Raja Bhagwān Dās, now a commander in the imperial forces, and brother of Akbar's Rajput queen, Jodh Bāī, the mother of Jahāngir. He was given ■ pleasant retreat on the shores of the Maota Lake, just below the palace.

<sup>1</sup> Jan Gopal does not give the daughters' names. The names in the text are those traditionally ascribed to them.

<sup>2</sup> Sanaka was one of the four "mind-born" sons of Brahma mentioned in the *Vishnu Purāna*.

Crowds flocked to see him and listen to his message. Of the gifts presented to him he kept nothing for himself. All he received was immediately distributed. He would not touch money. Food and shelter, and these of the simplest kind, were all he asked.

The lavish gifts bestowed on Dadu aroused the cupidity of a self-styled sādhu of Mandota. This man resolved to share in the people's bounty by passing himself off as one of Dadu's disciples. The ruse succeeded beyond his expectations. The name of Dadu acted as a charm. He was loaded with gifts in money and in kind. His conscience, however, began to trouble him. What manner of saint was this, the mere mention of whose name was enough to stir every generous instinct of men's hearts? Hastening to Amber, he cast himself at Dadu's feet, and from that day became a true disciple.

To this happy and largely uneventful period belongs the story of Dadu's visit to Akbar at Fatehpur Sikri. The meeting came about in this way. Dadu's presence in Amber had not escaped the notice of the Emperor, and in conversation with Bhagwan Dās he expressed a strong desire to see and talk with him. The Raja was not at all sure that Dadu would welcome the proposal, and withdrew to his encampment in much anxiety of mind. A faithful retainer, Sūjā Khinchī by name, agreed to undertake the delicate mission. Arrived at Amber, he presented the Raja's letter and explained his errand, only to be met by a blank refusal. "What have I to do with kings and emperors?" Dadu asked. But Suja was insistent. He refused to return alone. He would not touch food or drink, he declared, he would not leave the saint's presence, till he had won his assent to accompany him. Moved by this appeal, Dadu relented and intimated his readiness to comply with the Raja's wishes. Preparations for the journey were at once begun, and within a few days Dadu, accompanied by seven disciples, set out under the escort of Suja for Fatehpur Sikri.

#### AT FATEHPUR SIKRI

On arrival Dadu was met at some distance from the city by Raja Bhagwan Das and several of his own disciples, including Jan Gopal, the chronicler of these events. Amid great rejoicing he was conducted to the Raja's camp. A few days later, when



he had recovered from the fatigue of the journey, the Emperor was informed of his arrival. Akbar was much pleased and gave orders that he be brought to the palace without delay. Dadu was then conducted to the building known as the Royal Stables, close to which stood the house of Raja Birbal. Bhagwan Das, familiar with the ways of the court, ventured to suggest that Dadu, on being admitted to the royal presence, should make some complimentary remark by way of creating a favourable impression. Dadu replied that he had no skill in the art of flattery: his trust was in God alone. Bhagwan Das then intimated to the Emperor that Dadu was in attendance.

Presently Shaikh Abu-l Fazl and Raja Birbal appeared for a preliminary interview. They were accompanied by a Brahman named Tulsi Rām, a relative by marriage of one of Dadu's Sikri disciples, of whom we are told that his religious principles had been sacrificed to his material ambitions. "Homage to the divine Akbar" was the greeting of this polished courtier. Dadu did not return the salutation. Instead, he recited the lines:

Homage to him whom all the saints adore,  
Whom sun and moon and earth and sky obey,  
Whom gods and men and choirs of angels praise:  
Homage to him, the pure, indwelling Rama.

"He it is with whom we have to do", he added. "What profit is there in falsehood?"

Tulsi Ram was shamed into silence, and Abu-l Fazl tactfully intervened. "Hear me, O saintly one. We esteem you highly, and desire to know more of your teaching. What God do you worship, and what is the manner of your worship?" "The God we worship", said Dadu, "is the Creator of all things. Our teaching is to hold Him in constant remembrance. Our mode of worship is to subdue the senses, and to sing the praise of Rama." "But", asked the Shaikh, "whence is He that has neither name nor dwelling? Where is His abode?" "True", Dadu answered, "God is other than His name: He can neither be uttered nor comprehended. Men for their own purposes have given Him diverse names. Beholding in Him some attribute, they have given Him the name of that attribute. He deals graciously, and they call Him Dayāl—the Gracious One; as



Protector of His creatures He is styled Gopāl--the Cowherd; as dwelling within the heart, He is known as Rāma; as showing mercy, He is Rahīm, the Compassionate; as outgoing man's reach, He is Allāh; as unseen, He is the Invisible; as fashioner of all things He is Creator; as transcending all limitation, He is the Absolute; as drawing men's hearts to himself, He is Mohan the Charmer; as pervading the universe, He is the Omnipresent. When did sugar announce that it was sweet, or the *nim*-tree declare its bitter flavour? Thus should one think of God's name. He accepts the homage of His true worshippers, and their witness is manifest in all the world."

Abu-l Fazl and Birbal were much impressed and lost no time in reporting to the Emperor that in Dadu they had found a real treasure, a saint with whom it was a privilege to hold converse. Dadu was immediately sent for and, escorted by Abu-l Fazl, Birbal, and Bhagwan Das, was ushered into the royal presence. After an exchange of greetings, Akbar asked where he was now living. "Wheresoever God appoints", was Dadu's answer. "I do not travel from place to place at my own pleasure. He it is who has brought me here, for nothing can fail of that which He ordains." He then went on to speak of Sambhar and Amber. Akbar expressed the hope that Dadu would come and see him frequently. "When you have found something of real value, it is your duty to share it. And if there is anything you want, you have only to make your wishes known." Dadu replied that he was in need of nothing. He was then invited to discourse on religion, but suggested that Akbar should rather ask any questions he chose. A long discussion followed, in which Akbar unfolded his doubts and perplexities, and was much pleased by Dadu's answers. "You have indeed got to the root of the matter", he said at last, "but how is this inward state of which you speak to be attained?" Dadu replied in a Persian couplet:

The soul, filled with passionate yearning, stands expectant at the door of vision;  
The surrendered heart dwells every moment in the divine presence, watchful, alert.

"First", he said, "let a man cease from the indulgence of the body, which binds him to the world. Let him abandon all hope

in the three worlds, and the Changeless One will surely reveal Himself." This was too much for Raja Birbal. If the vision of God was not to be found in the three worlds, where was it to be looked for? Let the saint first discover His abode, and then disclose it to others. "Hear me", said Dadu. "When the Creator fashioned the human soul He appointed for all, whether prince or peasant, ■ *ser* of grain and two loin-cloths. But the soul has greatly enlarged its desire: the truth is that it is never satisfied. When a man has ten things he desires twenty, when he has fifty he wants a hundred, when he has tens and hundreds of thousands he sighs for crores. The more his wealth increases, the less it seems. First he says: Let me possess the whole earth. Then he would scale the heavens and demand the realms of Indra and Shiva and Brahma, and even the abode of Death. But to whom will the Controller of human destiny grant all these? Nay, when this whole dream of possession has passed away, then has a man truly renounced the three worlds."

The Emperor was deeply moved, and pressed Dadu to come daily that he might hold further converse with him. "No", said Dadu, "I will not come again." Akbar was a little piqued by this curt answer. Abu-l Fazl suggested that Dadu should be his guest for a time; ■ similar proposal was made by Raja Birbal, and it was finally agreed that Dadu should remain for ■ few days at the latter's house before setting out for Amber. A day or two later Birbal confided to Dadu that Akbar had been somewhat hurt by his bluntness of speech. "His feelings were hurt", was Dadu's answer, "because I spoke the truth. Who loves the truth?" On Birbal's replying that God loved the truth, "Then", said Dadu, "I have given no offence to Him, let others take it well or ill". "But", the Raja protested, "the Emperor is a bodily manifestation (avatāra) of the Divine Being. It is fitting that you should acknowledge his authority. Men of all religious persuasions do him homage: he is an object of worship to Hindus and Muslims alike." "For my part", said Dadu, "I worship One alone; I bow the head to no other. All created beings are in the power of death. Only God abides unchanged." Birbal was at last convinced.

At the Raja's request, Dadu visited the zenana apartments, and the ladies of the Raja's household were delighted to meet

so eminent ■ saint. Birbal showed him the splendours of his dwelling. When they came to the Palace of Mirrors Dadu could restrain himself no longer. "It is all unreal", he exclaimed. "If you say it is unreal", said Birbal, "I am ready to give it all up and live in poverty." "Nay", replied Dadu, "if you but know it to be unreal, and spend your life in seeking other's good, that is the true renunciation." These conversations were dutifully reported to the Emperor, and when he had heard all that Birbal had to tell Akbar asked the Raja's advice regarding Dadu. Birbal counselled letting him depart. At the same time he urged the importance of cultivating his goodwill, reminding him how powerful was a saint's curse or blessing. A messenger was sent to inform Dadu that his host awaited him at the palace. Dadu came without demur, accompanied by Jan Gopal. Birbal then intimated that the Emperor desired to take farewell of him. As they entered the Audience Hall, Akbar rose and greeted him cordially, but Dadu remained silent. When the Emperor bade him discourse of divine things, he remarked sadly: "When the body is not pure, what can one understand of divine things?" and again fell silent. "Nay, Swami", said Akbar, "you are holding something back. There are 'holy men' enough in Sikri. Why should I have sent for you unless I believed you had some truth to impart? Tell me how one so enmeshed in the world's affairs ■ I am may find God? I am ready to love Him with every power of my being, and to school my heart in truth, if thus I may learn His secret." "Well spoken. Well spoken indeed!" said Dadu. "That is the sum of all I have to say. May God keep you ever in this mind." Akbar bowed his head. "Swami, you have given, and I have received." Upon this Dadu gave the blessing hitherto withheld: "I pray the indwelling God to keep you continually in His protection and favour". Akbar then begged Dadu to accept some parting gift, whatever he might choose, and Dadu replied ■ before that he had need of nothing. God provides for His own. In the words of Kabir: "If the faithful wife goes ill-clad, the shame is her lord's." The same evening a large company assembled, and the hours passed in religious converse and song. Birbal too would have pressed an offering upon Dadu, but in vain. "It is ours to give, not to receive. 'Tis the empty vessel you must fill with water, not that



which is already full." Next morning Dadu was conducted to the camp of Raja Bhagwan Das, who received him with great joy. "I was in great anxiety about your visit to Sikri", he confessed, "but the Almighty has upheld you." Here he was persuaded to remain one day more. By daybreak Dadu and his little company were already on their homeward way. Bhagwan Das accompanied them to the outskirts of the city and there took farewell.

#### LATER YEARS AT AMBER

A seven days' journey brought the travellers to Dausa, in the kingdom of Amber, and a few days later they reached the capital. Dadu's fame had spread throughout the whole countryside, and the number of his disciples steadily grew. From Amber he made frequent tours into the surrounding district, visiting companies of devout persons, and singing hymns of praise. On one of these expeditions he came to Tonk. A great religious gathering was being held. Dadu was lodged with his disciples in a large, shady garden. Their singing drew a great crowd. Mādhu Kānī, one of the two disciples at whose invitation Dadu had come, had prepared a feast in the saint's honour, but the numbers present exceeded all expectations, and supplies began to run short. Observing his concern, Dadu bade him have no anxiety. Taking a portion of the food provided, Dadu solemnly dedicated it in an act of worship and added it to the general store. When the meal was served the supply proved inexhaustible: all had enough and to spare.

On the return journey Dadu and his followers were met at the village of Gudhla by a herd of cows, which at once gathered round them, accompanying Dadu as he walked and standing with heads bowed when he stopped. Dadu gave them his blessing and they departed. As on a previous occasion in Sambhar his disciples were impressed by this evidence of his power over even the dumb creatures.

In the course of another tour, which included a visit to Sambhar, Dadu came to the village of Andhi. Pūrṇ Dās, a Hindu merchant of that place, had long besought him to come and spend the *chaumāsā*, or rainy season, at his home. It was a



year of drought, but in the month of Bhādra (Aug.-Sept.), as ■ result of the saint's prayers, plentiful rain fell.

On the death of Raja Bhagwan Das, his successor, Raja Man Singh, came to Amber. The whole populace went out to meet him. Only Dadu remained at home, absorbed in prayer and meditation. His detractors lost no time in bringing this act of discourtesy to the notice of their new ruler. 'There were other complaints as well. "He disregards caste rules. He makes no distinction between Muslim and Hindu. He enjoins his followers to cast out their dead in the jungle, without cremation or burial. He discourages marriage, saying it is good for our sons and daughters to remain celibate. Thus great harm is done, and reproach brought upon our land." Man Singh, who had already met Dadu at Ramgarh some years before, took an early opportunity of seeing him. Recalling their former interview, he expressed surprise that Dadu had not taken the trouble to inquire after his welfare. "I did indeed inquire", was Dadu's answer. "I inquired of God." The Raja then asked: "When one of your number dies, is it your custom to bury the body, or to burn it?" To this Dadu replied by quoting the lines:

The open plain befits the sadhu,  
Where is neither tomb nor burning-ground.

The Raja wished to raise the question of celibacy, but was at a loss how to approach it. Dadu, discerning his thoughts, answered the unspoken question. "When so many are aflame with lust, what reproach is there in continence? Children are wedded in infancy; among all castes are widows of seven years old. If these fall from virtue, on whom must the blame be laid? Abortions are procured to avoid disgrace. It is deeds like these that bring shame upon your land. For myself, I neither enjoin marriage, nor forbid it. Let each choose for himself the poison or the nectar." Man Singh went on to speak of Dadu's disciples. "You receive men of all castes. That, I suppose, is how you make so many converts." "It is not I who make converts", said Dadu. "Those come who of their own choice have given themselves to God. Thus they are known as my disciples." "And how", the Raja asked, "do you supply the needs of so large a company, without accepting money from anyone?" "The

all-knowing Lord", Dadu replied, "makes provision for all." Says Kabir:

He who has surrendered all worldly hopes and ambitions,  
To him does the Lord Himself minister. His servant is free from care.

Man Singh was satisfied, but the enmity of the orthodox Hindu party, and especially the brahmans, continued. Fresh representations were made and a second interview was arranged at which the old questions were reopened and hotly debated. On this occasion Tilā, a favourite disciple, seems to have been the chief spokesman on Dadu's side. It soon became clear that nothing short of Dadu's expulsion from Amber would appease the opposition party. The Raja had no desire to offend his Hindu subjects, but was equally reluctant to request this troublesome saint to leave his capital. Dadu had already grasped the situation, and formed his decision. "How long have you now been in Amber?" the Raja asked. "Fourteen years", Dadu answered, at the same time rising to his feet as though to take his departure. Realising that his question had been taken as an intimation that Dadu had overstayed his welcome, the Raja sought to repair his blunder and begged forgiveness for the supposed implication of his words. Dadu assured him that no offence had been taken: he was well content to dwell wherever God should appoint. But his decision remained unshaken. The next few days were spent in preparations for his departure. Then, turning his back on his old home by the edge of the Maota Lake, he set out on his wanderings.

#### THE 'TEN YEARS' PILGRIMAGE

A few days' march brought Dadu and his company to Bharbhara, where he was the guest of one Rāgho Das. Here he received an invitation to take up his abode in Kalyanpur, a village he had often visited, and where he had many friends. A year was spent in Kalyanpur, then he turned his steps westward. From this point onwards his advance, of which it is unnecessary to speak in detail, assumes something of the character of a triumphal progress. Doors that had long been closed began to open at his touch. Ancient and honoured names appear with

growing frequency in the lists of his adherents, alongside of those of humble station, showing that his lifelong protest against racial pride and caste exclusiveness had not been in vain. At every point of his journey he was met by emissaries eager to conduct him to one village or another whither his fame had outrun him. It was a joyous company that, a few weeks after leaving Kalyanpur—the “City of Peace”, as it had indeed proved to be—crossed the border into Marwar (Jodhpur), singing as they went. Among the places visited were Reyan, Idwa, Talana, Rani, Tausin, and the ancient city of Merta. Among Dadu’s converts are mentioned two Rathor noblemen, Rao Man Singh of Bhawadi and Kishan Singh of Merta. From Marwar Dadu passed on to Bikanir. The Rao of Bhuratiya, hearing of his arrival, sent messengers to welcome him and himself set out to meet him. The Rao was puzzled by this sadhu who bore no outward marks of his calling, and had many questions to ask regarding his religion and mode of worship. He was specially interested in the question of sect-marks and rosaries. “I have been told”, he said, “that you carry some kind of magical rosary about with you. If you will let me have it you shall have one of pure gold in exchange.” “We have no rosary”, Dadu explained, “but that which the Divine Teacher has bestowed—the rosary of the heart. What need has he of a rosary, whether of wood or of gold, in whose heart the All-knowing dwells?” More than once the Rao proposed that Dadu should settle permanently in his village. He offered to have a house built for the saint and his followers, and to make all necessary provision for them. After talking the matter over with his disciples, Dadu decided not to accept the kind offer. It was not good for the servant of God to be at the bidding of others; the acceptance of favours carries obligations with it. Pressed for a final answer, he spoke his mind plainly: “We will follow the life Rama appoints for us, courting the favour of neither prince nor people. The heart of man changes. God is ever the same.” It was during this visit to Bikanir that Sundar Das, known as the Elder,<sup>1</sup> is said to have become a disciple.

<sup>1</sup> Not mentioned in Jan Gopal’s narrative. Sundar Das was the reputed founder of the Naga branch of the order. The story appears to have gained currency only when his descendants took to the profession of arms.



Dadu now returned to Tausin, in Marwar, and spent the next two years or so travelling from town to town and village to village. Finally, he came to Naraina, in Jobner,<sup>1</sup> then a small independent principality in possession of the Khāngarot clan, one of the "Twelve Houses" of Amber. Here he made the acquaintance of one Bakhnā, a humble Muhammadan, to whom he felt immediately drawn. The attraction was mutual. Bakhna had a fine voice and was very fond of singing. Dadu remarked how fitting it would be if so fine a gift were devoted wholly to the service of God. Bakhna took the word to heart and became an ardent disciple. He accompanied Dadu wherever he went, singing hymns of praise.

After a year spent in Naraina, Dadu turned his face once more to Marwar. A devout Muslim, Lodi Khan by name, who lived at Ghatwa, had often pressed Dadu to visit him. This the Swami now did, amid great rejoicing. At Ghatwa he was met by Prayāg Das, a Mahājan (merchant), afterwards a well-known disciple, who had come to conduct him to his own village of Kardoli. On this tour Dadu also visited Didwana and several other places in Marwar, returning to Naraina for the rainy season.

At the close of the rains a third visit to Marwar was decided upon. After a brief visit to Ajmer,<sup>2</sup> undertaken at the request of Rajjab Das, the most eminent of his Muhammadan disciples, he again crossed the border. Multitudes flocked to see him at various points of his journey. At Kevalpur he was entertained by three disciples of Rajjab. At Padu, one Alhan invited Dadu to his house. He was a poor man, and the villagers who were invited to a feast in Dadu's honour doubted his ability to do justice to so great an occasion. But by the saint's blessing Alhan's modest store proved more than sufficient. It was noted that Dadu treated his humble host with marked consideration, sharing with him his own drinking cup as a special token of friendship. After this final visit to Marwar, Dadu returned by way of Palri and Idwa, to Naraina.

Dadu's thoughts were turning more and more to the scene of

<sup>1</sup> Naraina, with which Dadu's name is so closely associated, takes its name from Narain Singh, an ancestor of the present house of Jobner.

<sup>2</sup> The Ajmer district, though under imperial rule, was still spoken of as Marwar, of which it once formed a part.



his early labours, and the closing years of his long pilgrimage were spent almost entirely in the towns and villages of Dhundhār (Jaipur). On resuming his journey from Naraina, he was accompanied by no fewer than twenty-seven disciples, among whom it is interesting to note the names of two devout women. First they came to Sambhar, where a warm welcome awaited them. From there they passed on to Baraina, Bachlun, Punyana, and Ratanpur. The Rathorani Queen of Amber,<sup>1</sup> a pious woman, was eager to see Dadu and sent her family priest with two other trusted messengers to invite him to re-visit Amber. Dadu yielded to their entreaties. His arrival in Amber was hailed with great rejoicing. The Rani loaded him with gifts, which were immediately distributed; he would take nothing for himself. But his stay was a brief one. He left in a few days without intimating his departure to the Rani. Messengers were sent post-haste to Karanjali, whither he had gone, to ascertain the reason of his unceremonious departure. The Swami received them with great kindness, and sent them back with a gracious message to the Rani, but he himself did not return. At Karanjali a devout woman named Rānī Bāī joined the ranks of Dadu's followers. At Sanganer, Kanauta, and Basi he was welcomed by little groups of disciples, and many new adherents were won. He next came to Tahatra, and thence to Dausa, afterwards famous as the birthplace of Sundar Das the Younger. Sundar was then only a child of six, but retained a vivid recollection of the saint's visit. A short visit was paid to Tahalri, in the hill country not far from Dausa, where lived Jag Jiwan, a Hindi scholar who had come from Benares, in the early days of Dadu's residence at Amber, and attached himself to his cause. Dadu next came to Kalyan-Patan, and thence by Rahori and Ratanpur to Sambhar. From Sambhar he went on to Kalyanpur, the home of so many happy memories. He was invited to attend a large gathering of disciples, new and old, at Morra. Here an enthusiastic welcome awaited him. It was the climax of his tour through Dhundhar. Men and women danced and sang in a wild ecstacy of joy. The very beasts of the field, wild

<sup>1</sup> Either the Rani of Raja Man Singh, or the Queen Dowager, the widow of the late Raja Bhagwan Das. The Rathors, the ruling Rajput clan of Marwar, intermarry with the royal clan (Kachhwāha) of Jaipur.

and tame, leaped and gambolled in sympathy. But Dadu's strength was already beginning to fail. In broken health, he returned to Naraina, his course all but run.

#### LAST DAYS AT NARAINA

Dadu had received a divine intimation that he had only another year to live. As he bethought him of a spot where he might quietly end his days, his mind had been increasingly drawn to the "village by the lake" with which, in later years, he had formed so many intimate associations. The Jobner chief, Narain Singh, a *mansabdar* or commander in the imperial army, was serving in the Deccan. When he learned of Dadu's wish to settle in Naraina, the thing pleased him well. On his return shortly afterwards, he invited Dadu to take up his permanent residence there. As at Amber, detractors were not wanting, but Narain Singh would not listen to them. For three days Dadu remained at the palace. Then he went to the Tripolya, or Triple Arch,<sup>1</sup> on the edge of the lake, on whose watch-tower he sat for seven days, absorbed in meditation. Narain Singh came daily to inquire for his welfare, and treated him with great reverence and affection. Dadu was awaiting some further divine leading, when the answer came through the agency of a snake which glided past him, and seemed to beckon him to follow. His strange guide led him to a *khejrā* tree, where it spread out its hood and disappeared from view. Here Dadu found a resting place. Behind was a garden, and the water was close at hand. Sadhus came from all directions to do him homage, and vied with each other in ministering to his wants.

On one occasion, not long before his death, a company of glorified saints, among whom were Namdev and Kabir, came to visit him. All night the low murmur of voices was heard; when day broke, no trace of the visitors was to be found. When his disciples asked with whom he had been conversing during the night, Dadu explained, and Tila and his fellow watchers understood. As the time of parting drew near, Garib Das asked a question which was in the minds of all. Dadu had taught

<sup>1</sup> A massive triumphal arch, built from the stones of a demolished Hindu temple.

them a way of life devoid of outward rites and observances. They lived neither as Muslims nor ■ Hindus. Their worship was a wholly inward thing. How was this cult to be maintained when he was taken from them? What was to be its visible sign or token? "Retain this form of mine which you behold", was Dadu's answer. "Think not that it is a body of flesh, but rather as a reflection seen in a mirror. If you still doubt, pass your hand over it and see for yourself." When Garib Das stretched forth his hand to do so, it passed through the saint's body as through the flame of a lamp. Garib Das was moved to ask another question. "Will another saint one day arise in this place?" To which Dadu replied: "A hundred years hence such a saint will arise. It will be ■ time of great confusion."<sup>1</sup>

Having taken farewell of all his disciples, Dadu bathed and took a little food, after which he seated himself apart to await the final summons. On the eighth day of the dark half of the month Jyeshth of the Samvat year 1660,<sup>2</sup> at the end of the first watch, Dadu obtained release. His sons Garib Das and Miskin Das were both present at the time of his passing, as well as Rajjab and a few other intimate disciples. All restrained their grief: there was no unseemly demonstration. The senior disciples took counsel and decided to convey the saint's body to the hill of Baraina, some twelve miles distant. Two days before a magnificent palanquin, recognised as sent by the Lord, had arrived on which to bear him. When they reached the hill they placed the bier, in accordance with Dadu's last instructions, on a high crest. After performing the last offices of respect, they spread a sheet over the body and returned, with no outward manifestation of grief, but chanting hymns of praise. As the news of Dadu's passing spread, there was universal lamentation. Crowds flocked to Baraina. Those who arrived first saw the palanquin. Then a wondrous thing happened. Even as they watched the palanquin passed from their sight. The Disposer of events had granted Dadu a departure like that of Kabir.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A clear reference to Jait Sahib, the organiser of the later Dadu Panth.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 1603.

■ The story is that Kabir's Hindu and Muslim followers quarrelled over his body. When they removed the sheet with which it was covered they found only a heap of fragrant flowers.

NOTE. Jan Gopal's narrative gives the following dates.

	<i>Hindu Samvat</i>	<i>A.D.</i>
Birth of Dadu . . .	1601	1544
Arrival in Sambhar . .	1625 (1630?)	1568 (1573?)
Birth of Garib Das . .	1632	1575
Arrival in Amber . .	1636	1579
Interview with Akbar . .	1642	1584-85
Came to Kalyanpur . .	1650	1593
Came to Naraina . .	1659	1602
Died . . . . .	1660	1603



HISTORICAL DATA:  
GROWTH OF THE DADU LEGEND

WE have now to inquire what body of solid truth emerges from the story recorded in our previous chapter. Fortunately, despite many obscurities, the main outline of Dadu's career is tolerably clear. The date of his birth (A.D. 1544) is probably correctly given. The fact of his death in 1603 at the comparatively early age of fifty-nine was not one in regard to which his disciples were likely to be mistaken. Dadu's long and intimate association with Sambhar, Amber, and Naraina is so fully established by local tradition as to be beyond question. The humble dwelling in which he lived and worked at Sambhar is well-known. On its site now stands ■ *Dādū-dwāra*, or temple of Dadu. Outside the city wall a raised platform, surmounted by ■ graceful cupola, marks the spot (now encroached upon by the waters of the salt lake) to which he was wont to retire to meditate. At Amber, until quite recently, the house in which he dwelt with his family for fourteen years—a quaint little “hut and ben” approached by a few descending steps—stood practically as it had been occupied by Dadu. Like the house at Sambhar, it has now given place to a *Dadu-dwara*, or temple, but the main features of the original building have been preserved. Naraina, now the headquarters of the order, has many hallowed spots for Dadu's followers: the Triple Arch overlooking the lake where he sat in meditation; the rude shelter of unmortared stone built for him by his disciples; the *khejra*-tree in whose shade his closing days were spent, and under which his bones are believed by many to lie buried. In the inner shrine of the modern *Dadu-dwara*, beneath the Sacred Book which takes the place of the idol seen in Hindu temples, are preserved the robe, the cap, and the sandals of the great Guru. As regards Dadu's journeyings, the detailed itinerary given by Jan Gopal (of which we have attempted only the barest summary) may also be accepted, on the strength of local

tradition, as on the whole an authentic record. It should be noted further that Jan Gopal's narrative, which is undated, closes with the installation of Dadu's eldest son, Garib Das, as spiritual head of the order. From this it is a safe inference that, as already suggested, it was completed not many years after Dadu's death.

So far all is simple and straightforward. When we proceed to fill in the details of the picture, however, difficulties at once arise. These difficulties are not lessened by the discovery that the *Life Story of Dadu* now generally current as the work of Jan Gopal differs in many important respects from the original poem by that author. The current *Life Story* is on the face of it ■ composite work. The text varies considerably in different manuscripts. Some of the variations may be mere accidents of transmission, but there are also awkward breaks in the narrative, and a large number of quite obvious and highly significant interpolations. The text is apt to be most confused just at those points where one looks for light on the early tradition. Happily, manuscript versions are still extant of an earlier version of the poem, which has some claim to be regarded as the original work of Jan Gopal. A careful comparison of the two versions leaves no doubt that in several places the text has been deliberately amended, and in some cases entirely re-written, to bring it into line with the later tradition of the Panth. The story of the finding of the child floating downstream in ■ basket (a reminiscence of the Kabir story), and that of the miraculous birth of Dadu's four children (a concession to later ascetic ideals), have no place in the original poem, which opens simply with the account of Dadu's birth in the home of a *dhuniya*, or cotton-carder, and the rejoicing with which it was attended. Similarly, the birth of Dadu's four children at Sambhar is related as a normal domestic event. Numerous other instances might be quoted. Suffice it to say that the current *Life Story* abounds in fantastic episodes, belonging to a later stratum of tradition, many of which it has not been thought necessary to include in our narrative. Specially noteworthy is the laborious effort to eliminate all references to Dadu's humble origin, to his working at his hereditary occupation as a cotton-carder, to his family life at Sambhar and Amber, and so on. In

the incident of the thief breaking into his house at Saumbha, for example, Dadu's "disciples" are substituted for his wife and mother, and the noise that arouses them is not, as in the original, the stumbling of the intruder over the implements of Dadu's trade, but the rustling of the leaves of a book he has encountered! Similarly, in the Amber story, the death of his wife in the jungle in the course of one of his journeys is passed over in silence. In later writers the process is carried still further. Dadu's visit to the Emperor at Sikri becomes a favourite theme, and the story is written up, to an ever-growing accompaniment of miracles and portents, till all semblance of truth is lost. Even in the early versions of Jan Gopal's *Life Story* a legendary element is already apparent, but the narrative is for the most part sober and restrained, remarkably so indeed for a popular devotional manual. Handled with discrimination, it has a real contribution to make to the study of our subject.

Almost the only early reference<sup>1</sup> to Dadu, outside the literature of the Panth, is found in a Persian work, the *Dābistān-i-Mazāhib*, a kind of encyclopædia of religions, written, according to Blochmann,<sup>2</sup> by an unknown Muhammadan writer about sixty years after the death of Akbar, i.e. about A.D. 1665. We quote the passage in full:

One sect is that of the Dadupanthis. Dadu was by birth a *naddāf* (cotton-carder) and lived at Naraina, one of the towns of Marwar. He adopted the ascetic life in the time of the Emperor Akbar, and made many disciples. He forbade the practice of idolatry among his followers. He also prohibited the eating of flesh, and sought to avoid causing pain to any living creature. He did not require the abandonment of secular pursuits, nor forbid marriage. People were left free to remain celibate or to marry, to withdraw from the world's business or engage in it as they saw fit, and his disciples embraced both classes. When a member of the sect dies, their custom is to place him on a bed and carry him out to the jungle. They say it is good that the wild animals should feed upon him and satisfy their hunger.<sup>3</sup>

The quotation is of great interest as presenting the Dadu tradition in the earliest and simplest form in which it can now

<sup>1</sup> Dadu is mentioned by the Maratha poet Tukaram about 1630-40.

<sup>2</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari*.

<sup>3</sup> *Dābistān-i-Mazāhib*, Chapter xii.



be traced. It also throws light on the extent of Dadu's influence, and establishes the existence of a more or less organised Panth, or sect, within about half a century of his death. The summary given of Dadu's teaching, while concerned mainly with externals, is remarkably well-informed, and possibly indicates some acquaintance with the written *Bani*, or "Oracles", of Dadu.

As we have already said, it would be an unprofitable task to pursue the subject of the historicity of the traditional story into all its minor ramifications. We confine ourselves to one or two main issues which have unfortunately given rise to a good deal of somewhat embittered controversy, and are not without relevance to our present study. What remains to be said may be conveniently gathered up under four heads, namely: (1) Where was Dadu born? (2) To what caste or community did he belong? (3) Who was his religious teacher? (4) Does his recorded interview with Akbar rest on a basis of historical fact? If it is not possible to find a completely satisfying answer to all these questions—and room must doubtless be left for legitimate difference of opinion—we believe that the result of our inquiry will be to show that the debatable margin is smaller than might at first sight appear.

#### I. DADU'S BIRTHPLACE

This is not in itself a matter of any great importance. The tradition is that Dadu was born in Ahmedabad. In the earliest extant versions of Jan Gopal's *Life Story of Dadu*, Ahmedabad is mentioned as his birthplace, and there is no reason to suspect the hand of the redactor at this point. The absence of any local tradition in its favour is no argument against this view. The main portion of Dadu's life was admittedly spent in Rajputana, and there is no suggestion of his having visited (or re-visited) Ahmedabad in later years. On the other side, the argument from Dadu's supposed knowledge of the Gujarati tongue may be at once dismissed. The presence of Gujarati words and inflexions in the *Bani* of Dadu is not disputed. Evidence of an equal "knowledge" of Panjabi, Sindhi, and Marathi, not to speak of Persian and Arabic, may also be found in Dadu's poems. But it would hardly be claimed by any impartial student that Dadu had more than a superficial acquaintance



with all, or any, of these languages or dialects. As regards Gujarati, one has to travel no further than the south-western borders of Rajputana to hear the mixed dialect to be met with in the so-called Gujarati hymns. The argument is in fact two-edged, for, in the opinion of those most competent to judge, the language of these hymns affords a strong presumption that Gujarati was *not* Dadu's mother-tongue. If the Ahmedabad story be rejected, some explanation has still to be found how it came to be generally accepted. Can any convincing, or even plausible reasons be adduced for the deliberate transference of the saint's birthplace from Rajputana to Gujarat? Our later investigations in this chapter may possibly throw further light on the question. For the present it need only be remarked, as a fact of some significance, that, except in Jan Gopal, there is no reference to the Ahmedabad tradition in the early literature of the Panth. Even the poet Sundar Das, who belongs in all but name to the second generation of Dadu's followers, has either never heard the Ahmedabad story or completely ignores it. Whether Dadu's first disciples had authentic information regarding his birthplace, or merely assumed him to be a native of Sambhar, it is impossible to determine. At all events they invariably speak of him as "manifested" (the technical word for the appearance on earth of a great saint or teacher) at Sambhar. This, of course, does not rule out the possibility of a real connection with Gujarat. A legend generally attaches itself to some nucleus of fact. When we recall that, in the years preceding Dadu's birth the province of Gujarat was a scene of wild confusion and anarchy, the horrors of war being succeeded by the worse horrors of famine and disease, an emigration on the part of Dadu's parents, either before his birth or in his early childhood, is well within the bounds of probability, and might be regarded as meeting the facts of the case. But here we professedly enter the realm of pure conjecture. The really important point is that Dadu's earliest known associations are with Sambhar.

## 2. DADU'S PARENTAGE

To what caste or community did Dadu belong? Here at least we are able to give a quite positive answer. The evidence at our

disposal places the matter beyond dispute. In view of the veil of mystery which later tradition has drawn over the subject of Dadu's origin, it is desirable that the grounds on which our conclusion is based should be clearly and fully stated.

In the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, as we have seen, Dadu is described as a *naddāf*, or cotton-carder. This is in harmony with Jan Gopal's testimony in the *Life Story of Dadu*. The Hindi equivalents of the word *naddāf* (*dhuniyā*, *pinjārā*, *pinārā*) are applied in Rajputana to the descendants of a caste-group of Hindus who became converts to Islam in the times of the Lodi dynasty. In pre-Muhammadian days, as in the villages to-day, cotton-carding was a domestic industry, and there was no Hindu caste of cotton-carders. The fact that the *pinaras* act as oilmen, and are also known as *telī-pinārās*, suggest that they originally belonged to a Hindu caste of oil-pressers. They regarded themselves, as they do to-day, as "Pathāns" by adoption, and frequently took Afghan names. Many still bear the name of Lodi. They now form practically a separate community, one of the many endogamous groups within the brotherhood of Islam. They are for the most part illiterate, and retain not a few of their old Hindu customs.<sup>1</sup> The view that Dadu was a Muhammadian by birth is still widespread among his own followers. The theory of his brahman origin, while assiduously propagated by later writers, is of comparatively recent date. To the best of our knowledge, it makes its first appearance in a commentary on the *Bhaktamāla* (*Rosary of Saints*) of Ragho Das, written as late as A.D. 1800. Even in the revised version of Jan Gopal's *Life Story* Dadu is described only as the (adopted) son of an Ahmedabad merchant, whose name is not given. The recension already betrays a certain uneasiness on the subject of Dadu's origin,<sup>2</sup> but the fiction of his Hindu descent is still only in process of evolution. In the *Commentary* (written by Chatur Das) Dadu has become the adopted son of Lodi Ram, "a well-known Nāgar Brahman of Ahmedabad". (Did any Nagar Brahman ever bear such a name?) In the *Dādūrāmodaya* (*The Dawning of Dadu*), a nineteenth-century Sanskrit work by Hīrā Dās of Bhiwānī,

<sup>1</sup> Daryā Shāh, the founder of a minor branch of the later *Rām Snehis* ("Lovers of Ram") also belonged to this community.

<sup>2</sup> For the statement, "There was great rejoicing in the house of the *dhuniya*", is substituted: "There was great rejoicing among the saints."

Dadu's adoptive father receives the unexceptionable brahman name of Aghotra Vinodī Rāma.

In view of what has been said, it is hardly necessary to dwell on the fact that the members of Dadu's family all bear Muhammadan names. His father's name was Lodi, his mother's Basī or Basīran.<sup>1</sup> His sons were Garib and Miskin, and his grandson, son of Miskin, Faqir. The names of his daughters are uncertain. Rāmā Bāī, sister of Faqir, was the first to bear a Hindu name. As regards Dadu's own name, the Muhammadan name it most resembles is Dāūd (David), and some suppose it to be merely a transposition of the letters of that word. The name Dadu, however, is itself not uncommon as an affectionate diminutive of the Muhammadan name Allāhdād. The simplest explanation appears to be that Dadu was so named, and adhered in later life to the pet name by which he was known in childhood.

It is to the credit of Dadu's first disciples that the fact of his Muhammadan birth caused them no embarrassment. They stood too near to their revered teacher, and had imbibed too much of his own spirit, to be conscious of any stigma attaching to mere natural descent from the "race of demons".<sup>2</sup> When they allude to the fact at all, it is to glory in it. Sundar Das, in a well-known poem, speaks of "this wondrous *pinara*" who came to "card the cotton of the spirit". As Kabir drew lessons from the weaving-loom at which he worked, so Sundar finds in the implements of Dadu's craft a parable of spiritual things. Rajjab Das, the most famous of Dadu's Muslim disciples, is not less explicit:

Dadu, that master of the senses and most eminent of saints, was born in the home of a cotton-carder, yet practised the most perfect yoga. On account of what caste did he attain this elevation?<sup>3</sup>

Khem Das, a disciple of Rajjab, writes in the same strain:

Brahman, leather-worker, Hindu, Turk, flesh-eater none will He regard as of superior caste.

One day God will take his seat as Judge, and separate the water from the milk.

<sup>1</sup> The names are mentioned by Jaggāī, and others.

<sup>2</sup> *Asur*, demon, was the term applied by Hindus to their Muslim oppressors, as the Muslims spoke of the Hindus as *kāfir*, infidels.

<sup>3</sup> *Sarvāṅgyoga*.



To Mohan the Scribe, chief recorder of Dadu's 'oracles', is ascribed the following:

Nāmdev, Kabīr, Raidās, Dādū, Dhannā Jāt, all were of *sudra* birth;  
Through the worship of Rama alone they became ■ the eleven  
Rudras.<sup>1</sup>

One could ask for no more convincing evidence that the idea of Dadu's being of brahman, or even Hindu, birth had not so much as entered the minds of the first generation of his followers. The efforts of a later generation to vindicate his caste status might well call down his rebuke:

Men delight in false distinctions;  
To the Lord the truth is dear.

### 3. DADU'S RELIGIOUS TEACHER

In every *Dadu-dwara* may be seen a portrait of Dadu as a child standing with folded hands in the presence of his spiritual preceptor, ■ venerable bearded figure clad in ■ long white robe. The name given to this teacher is "Buddhan", the Aged One. It will be recalled that, when Dadu was a boy of eleven, the Supreme Being is believed to have appeared to him in the character of an old ascetic and initiated him into divine truth. The text ordinarily quoted in support of the tradition occurs in the opening lines of the *Bānī*.

In the secret place I found the divine Guru: I received the token of  
his favour;  
He placed his hand on my head, and revealed things unsearchable,  
unfathomable.

Only by straining the meaning of the text, however, can it be made to bear the interpretation put upon it, the reference being clearly, not to an objective manifestation such ■ the traditional story assumes, but to an inward spiritual illumination. To say that God Himself was Dadu's teacher is indeed only to repeat what the poems themselves continually affirm, but this leaves us entirely uninformed as to the historical identity of "Buddhan". There is something strangely elusive in the

<sup>1</sup> Rudra, a Vedic deity, is identified with Shiva. Hindus acknowledge eleven Rudras. Rai Das and Dhanna Jat were, like Kabir, disciples of Ramananda.



references of Dadu's early followers to this mysterious being. The poet Sundar Das, whose lifelong contact with Dadu's original disciples must have given him access to reliable sources of information, is singularly reticent on the subject. In a curious poem, the *Guru Sampradāya*, which is seldom included in the printed editions of his poems,<sup>1</sup> he gives an elaborate account of his own spiritual lineage, in which the Aged One appears as "Vṛiddhānanda". The poem would seem to have been written half in jest in reply to those who twitted him, an eminent scholar and writer, on his attachment to an obscure sect with no authentic tradition behind it. His answer is that the *sampradāya*, or school, to which He belongs is as ancient as the worship of God Himself. Nevertheless, for the satisfaction of his inquisitors, he proceeds in orthodox fashion to provide Vṛiddhānanda with a lengthy spiritual pedigree running to nearly forty stanzas, leaving the new cult, in point of antiquity, no whit behind the four great historical *sampradāyas*, or Vaishnava Schools. This roll of imaginary saints, whose names must have taxed the ingenuity of their inventor, culminates in Brahmānanda, apparently identified with the Supreme Being. It is barely credible that Sundar Das intended his imaginative flight to be taken quite seriously, and little attention has been paid to it.<sup>2</sup> With the growth of the idea of the Aged One as a direct manifestation of the Divine Being, the necessity for a genealogy reaching back to an immemorial antiquity disappeared. This may be one reason among others why Sundar Das's novel contribution to the theory of origins never became part of the established tradition.

Another line of inquiry promises more tangible results. It is natural to assume that, born in a Muhammadan home, Dadu would receive his early religious instruction from a Muhammadan teacher. It is no less natural to assume, as the basis of the later legend, that the teacher's name was Buddhān. This would go a long way to explain the absence of any allusion to Buddhān in Dadu's poems. Whatever their personal relations may have

<sup>1</sup> It is given in full in Purohit Hari Narayan's *Complete Works of Sundar Das* (*Sundar Granthāvalī*, Vol. I).

<sup>2</sup> It does reappear, half a century later, with slight variations in the *Phutkar Sawaiyya* of Ragho Das, who accepts the genealogy in good faith, and the virtues of each of Sundar's stucco saints are feelingly extolled.

been, Dadu's breach with Islam took place at an early stage of his career. Unless we are to suppose that Buddhān was himself the source of his disciple's heterodoxy, it was only by courtesy that he could continue to be recognised as Dadu's *munshid*, or spiritual preceptor, and the compliment, if such it was, might be more a source of embarrassment than of pride to the person thus honoured. The fact of Dadu's teacher being a Muhammadan would also fully explain the silence of a later generation on the subject of Buddhān's antecedents. The name of Buddhān was probably too well known to be entirely suppressed, but as the memory of Dadu's early association with him gradually faded, his personality seems to have become more and more merged in that of the Ancient One of later legend.

This, it should be added, is not mere conjecture. On the contrary, it corresponds very closely with certain facts within our knowledge. We know that the name of Buddhān (Hindi, *buddhā*, old) actually gave place to *Vriddha*, a good Sanskrit and Hindi word with the same meaning, and with no doubtful associations. In Sundar Das, as we have seen, it becomes *Vriddhānanda*, an unmistakable Vaishnava name, in the Ramananda tradition, and finally, in the later literature, *Vriddhapurusha*, a religious word, which might be not inappropriately rendered the "Ancient of Days". The name Buddhān still persists, however, in popular speech, and the belief that Buddhān was a historical person is very general among members of the Panth. Many frankly acknowledge that Buddhān was a Muslim saint, and that Dadu was at one time his disciple. Now we have incontrovertible evidence of the presence in Sambhar, in the time of Akbar, of a Muhammadan saint of this name, whose lineal descendants still have their home in Sambhar. Shaikh Buddhān, ■ he was called, belonged to the Qādirī order, founded by Abd-ul-Qādir Jilānī. He was the son of Qazi Ismāil, the first of a long hereditary succession who held the office of Qazi, or magistrate, at Sambhar under the Moghul emperors. The modern representative of the family still bears the honorific title of Qazi, and enjoys certain privileges formerly pertaining to the office. From the family records, it appears that Buddhān was the disciple of one Fath Muhammad. On adopting the life of a religious devotee, he surrendered his claim to the office of

magistrate, and never bore the title of Qazi. Qazi Ismail was succeeded on his death by Buddhan's son, Gul Muhammad.

It remains only to ask whether it is possible to establish a definite historical connection between Shaikh Buddhan and Dadu. This we are fortunately able to do. It is expressly stated by the Shaikh's descendants that Dadu was originally a disciple of Buddhan, and that, while Dadu later struck out a path of his own, the link between them was never completely severed. As evidence of this they point to the portrait in every *Dadu-dwara* of Buddhan receiving the homage of his disciple. The story of Vridhahapurusha they dismiss as a mere clumsy attempt to explain away Dadu's connection with a Muslim saint. Further, as irrefutable proof of Dadu's relations with Buddhan, they adduce the fact that the Qazi has always held a recognised position with reference to the central *gaddi*, or seat of authority, at Naraina. During the lifetime of the late Qazi Gulām Nabl, who was personally known to the writer, it was still the custom, when a new *mahant*, or abbot, was installed, for the Sambhar Qazi to send a cotton robe, a turban, and other articles of attire to the new head of the order, in recognition of his appointment. Till these were received, it was stated, the ceremony was regarded as incomplete. Further, once a year, on the eleventh day of the light half of the month Phalgun, it was the custom for the Qazi to send an official letter requesting payment of the usual *nazāna*, or gift. The messenger returned with a rupee, the token sum asked for. We have also the late Qazi's authority for the statement that in former times, on the occasion of the annual religious festival at Naraina, four portions of food were set apart for the Qazi, who generally paid a ceremonial visit at that time. When he was not present his *nāib* or deputy received the food at his house. The last-named practice, however, has been long in abeyance. In recent years the intercourse between the Mahant of Naraina and the Qazi of Sambhar has been confined to the formal exchange of letters and gifts as above described. At the time of the installation of a new Mahant in 1931 these last ceremonial relics of a bygone day were allowed to lapse.

The precise relation in which the Qazi stood to Dadu and his successors it may be impossible now to discover. The sending



of a ceremonial robe, turban, etc. is exactly analogous to the procedure followed by the head of the order in confirming the appointment of a local mahant. This would suggest that the spiritual authority of the descendants of Shaikh Buddhān was in some way recognised by successive occupants of the *gaddi* at Naraina. At the lowest, it indicates a real historical connection between Dadu and Shaikh Buddhān.

#### 4. DADU'S INTERVIEW WITH AKBAR

One question of great interest remains to be examined—namely the recorded meeting of Dadu with Akbar at Sikri. In the current versions of Jan Gopal's *Life Story*, the narrative falls broadly into two parts. The first part, which may be regarded as substantially the original work of Jan Gopal, is on the whole sober and dignified, and puts no undue strain on the credulity of the reader. The second part, with whose contents we have not burdened our narrative, is extravagant in the extreme. It describes in fulsome terms the overwhelming impression produced on Akbar by Dadu's visit, his acceptance of Dadu as his guru, and the silencing of all cavillers by a series of astounding miracles. In the later literature, as has been said, the story is further elaborated and embellished. In seeking to determine whether the whole episode is a pure work of imagination, we may safely confine our attention to what appears to be the authentic narrative of Jan Gopal.

In the first place, we may note that the historical setting of the scene, both as regards time and place, and as regards the principal actors involved, is exceedingly natural. It fits readily into what we know of the history of the period. The meeting is stated to have taken place at Fatehpur Sikri in the Samvat year 1642—that is, A.D. 1585. Now, a study of the Emperor's movements shows that he actually was in Fatehpur Sikri from February, 1584, till August, 1585. This leaves a space of several months within which the interview might have taken place. As Akbar did not return to Fatehpur Sikri for thirteen years, and as Raja Birbal, who figures prominently in the narrative, lost his life the following year, no later date is possible. The connecting link between Dadu and Akbar is provided by Raja Bhagwan



Das of Amber, the marriage of whose daughter Mān Bāl to Akbar's heir, Prince Salīm—the future Emperor Jahangir—took place at Sikri in February, 1584. It is probable that Bhagwan Das remained in Sikri till within a short time of Akbar's departure, and that Abu-l Fazl and Birbal were also with the Emperor till the latter set out for Rawalpindi in August. There is thus no difficulty about the supposed date of Dadu's visit. No more suitable date could have been chosen. It harmonises not only with the outward course of events, but also with what we know of the development of Akbar's religious views. The Emperor's breach with Islam was complete. The "Divine Faith" was established, and the salutation "*Allāhū Akbar . . . Jallā Jalāluhū*" adopted by members of the new cult. The slaughter of cows was prohibited, and abstinence from the use of flesh as food was enjoined on certain days. "The whole gist of the regulations was to further the adoption of Hindu, Jain, and Parsee practices, while discouraging or positively prohibiting essential Muslim rites."<sup>1</sup> Raja Birbal had become an adherent of the new faith. Akbar endeavoured to win over Raja Bhagwan Das (1582), and also Raja Man Singh (1587), but without success.

These conditions provide the necessary background of the meeting. Specially realistic is the preliminary interview with Shaikh Abu-l Fazl and Raja Birbal. On the arrival of the Jain saint and scholar Hīrāvijaya at the court of Akbar in 1582, we are told that he "was made over to the care of Abu-l Fazl until the sovereign found leisure to converse with him". Abu-l Fazl, in conjunction with Raja Birbal, at whose house Dadu is said to have been entertained, plays the same part in the story of Dadu's visit. It is true there is no reference to the incident in any of the Muslim histories, but as the same can be said of innumerable such interviews with sadhus of every description which took place at this period, the argument from silence counts for little. If the interview did take place, it is not to be supposed that it made the lasting impression on Akbar's mind that later writers would have us believe. At the same time, Akbar was quite capable of appreciating the genuine piety and fearless candour of this unassuming saint. When one recalls Akbar's

<sup>1</sup> Vincent A. Smith, *Akbar*, p. 221.

characteristic pose, caustically alluded to by Bartoli, in his conversations with religious teachers, of "protesting that he had no other object with his doubts than to seek and find out by the guidance of their wise answers the simple truth till then hidden from him",<sup>1</sup> one need not be unduly surprised that Dadu's followers, like so many others, should have been ready to claim Akbar as a convert to their faith. If the story is true, it is clear that no such startling result followed from Akbar's conversation with Dadu. From the saint's anxiety to return to Amber and shake off the dust of the imperial court from his feet, we should gather that he himself cherished no such illusion. It may well be that the deepest impression produced by the interview was that left on the mind of the faithful Jan Gopal.

If the story is pure fiction, it can at least be said that it is written by one well acquainted, not only with the conditions of the time and the ways of the imperial court, but even with the general topography of Fatehpur Sikri. The fact of Dadu's visit to Sikri being brought about through the good offices of one so closely in the Emperor's confidence as Raja Bhagwan Das is not in itself improbable. In the absence of confirmatory evidence from other sources, no definite conclusion can be drawn. But the simple, straightforward narrative which forms the basis of the tradition has an air of veracity which it is difficult to escape.

<sup>1</sup> Vincent A. Smith, *Akbar*, p. 341.

## Chapter Five

### DADU'S SPIRITUAL HISTORY

THE first thirty years of Dadu's life are a complete blank. Even the account of his seven years' wandering in what is vaguely described as the "middle country" between Gujerat and Rajputana forms no part of the original *Life Story*. Jan Gopal gives the date of Dadu's arrival in Sambhar as A.D. 1573 (not 1568, as in the later recensions of his work). One would give much to know something of Dadu's inner history during those silent years when the ideas that were to determine his whole future career were actively taking shape. For any knowledge of this we are thrown back entirely on the witness of his own hymns and poems.

Had the works of Dadu been arranged in chronological order it would have been possible to form a much clearer impression of the growth of his ideas. In the absence of any such clue, it is the peculiar temptation of the biographer to confuse what appears to be the logical order of events with the psychological, and to force the religious experience of his subject into categories of his own devising. Were it possible to think of the growth of a human soul as of necessity an unbroken progress from doubt to certainty, from despair to hope, from struggle and defeat to victory and peace, our task would be easier. We should then take as our starting point those verses in which the sense of frustration and failure finds most poignant expression.

O Govinda, how can I reach the other shore? No boat have I, nor oarsman. If Rama turns away his face, I perish.

There is no landing-place, no path where I may set my foot.

Adrift on a shoreless sea, Dadu is sore afraid.

(*Shabda*, 81.)

We should then pass on to those passages which tell of search rewarded, of the dawn of confidence and hope, and finally of the beatific vision in which all doubts and fears are resolved, and the soul is flooded with a peace beyond telling.

Leave me not, my holy Lord. I present myself a living offering to Thee.

In Thy fellowship is all happiness: I behold Thy face and lotus feet. With much searching have I found Thee. Beholding Thee with mine eyes I am content.

My refuge is in Thee, who dwellest within. Let me remain ever at Thy lotus feet.

Says Dadu: Now my heart goes not elsewhere. Having found Him within, I continue in rapt devotion.

(*Shabda*, 19.)

But, in the case of such passages, no chronological arrangement is possible. That Dadu, probably early in his career, passed through a period of severe inward conflict may indeed be gathered from many of the poems. The conventional imagery in which its ideas are clothed need not blind us to the deep religious feeling with which the hymn that follows is suffused:

I take refuge in Thee. Far and wide have I roved.

Keep, O keep me: I am in deep distress.

Mortifying the body with austerities and fastings I have wandered in error;

I have endured the pangs, now of heat, now of cold; I have placed my head beneath the saw.

I have worn myself out roaming the forests, visiting places of pilgrimage, clambering up hills and mountains;

I have scaled lofty peaks, to cast myself down, seeking to end my life in my despair.

Blind have I been, unable to see what was before my eyes;

Thus have I turned away from Thee, and been consumed.

O Hari, grant me now true penitence. Dadu is full of transgressions.

(*Pad*, 255.)

We can readily accept the tradition of Dadu, as a young man, eagerly consorting with sadhus and faqirs of every persuasion. Of restless and inquiring mind, he shared to the full the eclectic spirit of his time. But for him the quest of truth was no mere intellectual pastime. It was prompted by a passionate craving for some "more sure word" on which his soul could rest.

His mind early revolted from the religion of Islam, as he saw it exemplified in the lives of its professed exponents.



In whom is no kindness or love, whose hearts are as adamant,  
Such do thou call "black infidels" (*kāfir*). Far other is the gracious  
Lord.

The true believer (*momin*) is he whose heart is as wax (*mom*), one who  
knows God,  
Who does no violence, and eats no forbidden thing. Such a believer  
will find Paradise.

(*Sach*, 3, 31.)

And again:

Shame the sword, by putting it far from thy heart.  
All are made in the image of the Most High. O Mullah, slay not the  
innocent.

Cut rather the throat of anger, my friend: slay thine own self-regard;  
Perform thy five acts of devotion by sparing all these lives.

(*Dayā Nirbāṇā*, 35, 36.)

It lends vividness to such passages to remember that, when  
Dadu's career opened in Sambhar, the fall of Chitor, the  
terrible *jauhar* rite in which it culminated, and the merciless  
slaughter of 30,000 helpless peasants who had aided the de-  
fenders, had sent a shudder of horror through every town and  
hamlet, and the "curse of Chitor" was on every lip.

Themselves they slay not, but go about to slay others.  
Without the slaying of self, how can God be found?  
Why slay thy fellow mortals? slay thine own self rather.  
But thyself thou slayest not, who art skilled in the slaughter of others.

(*Sach*, 17, 19.)

To popular Hinduism Dadu was ■ little attracted as to  
orthodox Islam.

They have fashioned an image of stone, and called it the Creator.  
Says Dadu: They know not the truth: thus is the world sunk in error.

(*Alayā*, 150.)

Each consorts with the members of his own caste;  
The servant of Rama observes no such distinctions.

(*Sach*, 123.)

There are many learned pandits and brave instructors;  
There are countless garbs—for every one true seeker.

(*Bhesh*, 4.)

They (the brahmans) are called sons of Brahma, but their minds are void of discernment;

They expound their sacred scriptures, while evil spirits dance within.

(*Sach*, 94.)

He was profoundly stirred by the bitter wrangling of rival sects, and despaired alike of the Vedas and the Quran to bring men to ■ saving knowledge of God.

One says "Swami", one says "Shaikh": none grasps the mystery of this world.

One speaks of "Rama", and one of "Allah", but they know neither Rama nor Allah.

One favours the Hindu, one the Musalman, but they have no knowledge of what a Hindu or a Musalman is:

Thus is it with both factions. When understanding comes, only then can they discern the truth.

Dadu beholds the One Spirit: in speaking and hearing He appears to be many.

(*Pad*, 397.)

What was Muhammad's religion? To what Way did the angel Gabriel belong?

Say: The one Allah was their Master and Teacher.

(*Sach*, 115.)

Says Dadu: No Hindu am I, nor yet a Musalman.

I follow none of the Six Systems: I worship the Merciful.

Dadu belongs to neither faction: he is the devotee of Allah Rama.

He who is without form or limitation, the same is my Guru.

(*Madhi*, 46, 48.)

I have diligently searched the Vedas and Quran,

But the dwelling-place of Niranjana is far off: it is not here.

The judge knows not justice, though the book of paper is in his hand.

His days are spent poring over its pages, without discovering its secret.

How many have wasted a lifetime blackening paper, producing Vedas and Puranas.

The initiated reads but the single letter of the Beloved.

(*Sach*, 98, 100, 102.)

There would seem to be good grounds for placing earlier rather than later the more polemical passages which often so strongly recall the withering denunciations of Kabir.

The tiger, the lion, the jackal and all the rest — how many Musalmans there are!

By eating flesh they become "believers". Such is the wisdom of their pious instructor.

They cut throats and recite the creed: such is this miserable cult.

They say prayers five times a day, but honest conviction they have none.

(*Sauh*, 5, 14.)

The guru draws the milk and drinks: the disciple is the goat or cow. So precious time is wasted in vain talk.

The disciple is the cow, the guru the milkman. Great care does he take of him.

Well he may, when he makes his living by him!

(*Gurudev*, 123, 124.)

But these and similar home-thrusts can hardly be classed among Dadu's more characteristic utterances. He had no love of controversy, and eagerly sought to avoid it.

Fierce and terrible have they become, when they saw I was of neither faction;

Dadu has laid hold on the One, and bears the sign of no other.

If I speak, they command me to be silent; if I keep silence, they bid me speak.

What *escape* is there? But such is the world.

I plead ignorance, or assent, or hold my peace, to quench the flame of their enmity;

Only in constant remembrance of the Living One can deliverance be found.

(*Madhi*, 56, 69, 70.)

His experience had taught him the ineffectiveness of mere argument to awaken spiritual conviction. "Avoid futile discussion" is one of his counsels.

Not by disputation will you find fellowship with Hari.

Whether you carry your point or lose it, the joy of communion is lost.

(*Sang 2th*.)

The eager reformer who by sheer force of ridicule would shame out of existence all formalism and hypocrisy ripens into the humble saint who seeks, by his teaching and example, to lead men to the feet of One in whose presence all that is false and unreal drops away.

Further, on what appear to be more than purely subjective grounds, we are disposed to assign a comparatively early date to those ecstatic utterances, so characteristic both in form and substance of the *bhakti* writers of the time, in which the soul is pictured as sporting in the highest heaven with the Divine Lover.

I have found the unchanging Lover, in that place where is perennial joy;

The Supreme Soul sports with the human soul: the servant is with his Lord.

In an ecstasy of delight I sport with the Lover: there is heard the music of the reed;

The Lord is seated on his deathless throne, and gives me to drink of the cup of passionate love.

(*Parchā*, 5, 6.)

Not only are these among the most imitative of Dadu's verses. The phase of experience they present, so frequently extolled in the *bhakti* literature as the "topmost, ineffablest crown" of the devotional life, is in reality one of the most elementary. It consists in a riot of emotion, conceived under a variety of sensuous images and expressing itself, after the manner of the Krishna cults, in a rapturous devotion to the feet of Hari. The state of feeling described is in its nature transitory. It is, as Dadu well knew, when the soul resumes contact with the world of sense and time, that the real problem of the religious life begins. In these poems the ethical note, so prominent in many of the poems, has scarcely yet emerged. Much the same may be said of those passages in which use is made of the conventional language and imagery of the Sūfī, or Muhammanadan mystic, as, for example, when the Supreme Being is presented under the figure of the Wine-seller, and the worshipper as the habitué who haunts his courtyard.

While his senses remain he keeps coming to drink.

When he has drunk deep of the wine of love, he departs no more.

(*Parchā*, 330.)

For similar reasons, we are constrained to see, in the oft-repeated confession of the frowardness and deceitfulness of "this heart", and the passionate yearning for forgiveness and



reconciliation, not the early struggles of the religious novice, but the mature utterance of a rich spiritual experience. It is in the pure light of God that sin is seen in its true character. The "conviction of sin" is the mark, not of the sinner, but of the saint.

I have done much evil: be not Thou angry with me.  
 The Lord is rich in forbearance: to His servant belongs all the blame.  
 Nought but evil have I wrought, more than tongue can tell.  
 My Lord is pure: lay not the blame on Him.  
 I offend in every act: I fall short in every duty;  
 I sin against Thee every moment: pardon my transgression.  
 Boundless, measureless, are the evils I have done.  
 I am a sinner, O Father: in Thee alone is my refuge.

(*Bintl*, 2, 3, 5, 7.)

There is something deeply self-revealing in Dadu's constant insistence on the instability even of the heart once surrendered to God, and on the need for continual watchfulness if the new life kindled in the soul is to be maintained.

After being dead for an age, it suddenly springs to life again.  
 This heart is a mocker. Let none put any trust in it.  
 I have seen the dead heart come alive again, like a ghost at the burning-ground.  
 Even after it is dead it keeps starting up anew. Such is this heart, my child.  
 An age has gone in making it steadfast, nevertheless it grows restive;  
 In a moment of time it breaks out, and smites me down.  
 This heart is like a frog, which comes to life at the touch of water.  
 This heart is perverse. Place no confidence in it.

(*Man*, 97, 98, 99, 100.)

Among the poems most difficult to date are those which may be conveniently classed under the title "separation". The soul athirst for God is pictured as the faithful wife bereft of her husband's companionship and daily and hourly watching for his return. This was one of the favourite images in which Dadu gave expression to his own eager, and often anguished, longing for the vision of God's face. There is nothing strikingly original about these poems, though they impress the reader by their

deep sincerity. They cover every range of feeling from joyous and confident expectation to blank despair. As with the consciousness of sin, the closer the saint's approach to God, the stronger becomes his sense of the distance that separates him from his Creator, the more agonising his longing for the perfect vision in which every barrier is broken down. Many of these poems may suitably be placed early.

Ah me! oft do I feel such pangs of separation from my Beloved that  
I am like to die unless I see him.

Maiden, harken to the tale of my agony; I am restless without my  
Beloved.

In my yearning desire for the Beloved I break into song day and  
night; I pour out my woes like the singing-bird.

Ah me! Who will bring me to my Beloved? Who will show me his  
path and console my heart?

Dadu saith: O Lord, let me see thy face, even for a moment, and be  
blessed.

(*Psalm of Dadu*, No. 7. *Pad*, 151.)

But it is easy to believe that some of the most moving of these songs of separation are among Dadu's last utterances. His early followers did not err when they added to the story of his last days the epitaph:

Brand me with the fire of separation: grant me the tomb of the living  
dead.

Dadu has reached his home: the Eternal is his abode.

(*Birah*, 97. *Jivat Mritak*, 56.)

The Vedantist will naturally find the summit of Dadu's spiritual achievement in those verses which give fullest expression to that sense of oneness with the Supreme Being in which personal identity is lost.

Where Rama is, there I am not; where I am, there Rama is not.

The mansion is of delicate construction: there is no place for two.

While self remains, so long will there be a second;

When this selfhood is blotted out, then there is no other.

When I am not, there is but One; when I obtrude, then two.

When the veil of "I" is taken away, then does (the spirit) become as  
it was.

(*Parchā*, 44, 47, 48.)

The theist will as naturally seek the climax of Dadu's spiritual quest in the quiet assurance of a gracious and loving God with whom it is possible to enter into relations of intimate trust and fellowship.

Thine the excellence, O Lord, mine the unworthiness. The great things Thou hast done I know not.  
 How greatly hast Thou helped me, but I have been forgetful.  
 Thou Thyself didst create me, and didst keep me in the face of the body. Even there wert Thou my Protector, O Lord.  
 Thou didst knit together my members, and endow me with life.  
 Thou wast my support in my mother's womb.  
 In that place where food is burnt up, Thou didst preserve me, O Lord.  
 Day by day didst Thou put forth Thy might to provide for my needs; Thou wast ever near to me.  
 Boundless, unsearchable have been Thy benefits; but Thou hast never made mention of Them, O Lord.  
 Held in the spell of illusion I have been unmindful of Thee.  
 He that departeth from Thee (says Dadu) is consumed in the flame of his own desires.  
 Thine the excellence, O Lord, mine the unworthiness. The great things Thou hast done I know not.

(*Shahida*, 23.)

In the case of the last comparison, however—that of monism *versus* theism—the question of priority hardly arises, for—as will be seen later—the strongly contrasted ideas set forth in the two passages just quoted are more intimately connected in Dadu's thought than, to the Western mind at least, might at first sight appear.

The one certain conclusion it seems possible to draw from the internal evidence of the poems is that Dadu's life was one of sustained spiritual conflict, rewarded by hours of ineffable peace and joy in the realised presence of God. His ideal was too lofty, his hunger for God too real, his self-examination too searching, to allow him to rest in any mere external forms or conventional standards of piety. For him, as for the saints of all ages and climes, we may truly say that the road wound "uphill all the way". The God of his heart's devotion was One who smote that He might heal.

Without chastisement this heart obey's not Hari's command.

*(Gurudev, 86.)*

What grudge does the goldsmith bear the gold, when he bruises it  
with his hammer?

He fices it from all blemishes, that it may be worn about the neck.

*(Gurudev, 104.)*

Salvation, for Dadu, was not a philosophy of life, but an experience: a progressive victory day by day, through pain and conflict, over "this heart" in the power of Him who dwelt within it. The spiritual life was a battle in which the soul had to gain every inch it held, and to hold every inch it won. With the Apostle Paul, he might have said: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I press on."



## Chapter Six

### THE *BANI* OR "ORACLES" OF DADU

#### SOURCES AND TEXT

THE teaching of Dadu is preserved in a large body of hymns and poems brought together and edited by his followers after his death. These are classed under the general title of *Bānī*, inspired utterances or oracles. In this chapter we deal (1) with the main historical sources of the *Bani*, with special reference to the extent of Dadu's indebtedness to Kabir; and (2) with the present text of the *Bani* which forms the authoritative scripture of the Dadu Panth.

#### I. SOURCES OF THE *BANI*

The fact of Dadu's having been born in a Muhammadan home and educated by a Muhammadan teacher is one whose significance for his future theology it is possible to exaggerate. If, as our investigation has shown, Dadu was a member of a community converted *en masse* to Islam a generation or two before, we are hardly warranted in assuming that conversion, in the majority of cases, meant much more than the recital of the Islamic creed and the observance of certain prescribed religious duties. Anyone acquainted with the modern representatives of the social group to which Dadu belonged can readily understand how a genuine pride in their "Afghan" descent may exist alongside of a loyal adherence to many of the religious and domestic customs of their Hindu ancestry. In point of fact much more is being done at the present time for the instruction of indigenous Muslim communities in Islamic belief and practice than was deemed necessary or practicable in the period of which we write. If, then, as we have every reason to believe, Dadu became for a time the disciple of a Muslim teacher, this was probably due as much to his own interest in religion as to any external pressure. Despite many undoubted marks of Muslim influence, the background of

Dadu's thought is essentially Hindu. His mother-tongue was a dialect of Hindi, a language steeped in Hindu religious associations. So much must be freely conceded to those who lay stress on Dadu's Hindu origin. The conception of Dadu as a Sanskrit scholar, thoroughly versed in the "Six Systems" of Hindu philosophy, is, it need scarcely be said, the pious fiction of a later generation. His knowledge of the traditional faith was not that of the scholar, but of one who has mingled freely with men of every type and shade of thought, with a constant determination to "churn and extract the essence" (*Bichar*, 37). If, as is generally supposed, Dadu was formally illiterate, it is worth remembering that the disability was one he shared with his illustrious contemporary, the Emperor Akbar.

As regards Islam, Dadu's true sympathies were with the Sufis, or Muslim mystics, to whom both directly and through the influence of Kabir he owed much. Shaikh Buddhan, as we have seen, was a member of the Qadiri order, which found its way into India three centuries after its founder's death, in the latter part of the fifteenth century. Abd-ul-Qadir, affectionately known as the "Guardian Saint" and the "Saint of Saints", has been described ■ "the most popular and most universally revered of all the saints of Islam".<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that several of his descendants in India were canonised as patron saints of certain industrial castes or guilds.<sup>2</sup> One, Hassan Teli of Lahore, became the patron saint of the oilmen (*teli*), to whose connection with the *dhuniyas* or *pinjaras* (cotton-carders) reference has already been made. Whether Shaikh Buddhan stood in any such special relation to the oil-pressers and cotton-carders of Sambhar district we have no means of discovering, though such a connection is not in itself unlikely. At all events, from the long-surviving link between the Shaikh's descendants and the Dadu Panth we may safely conclude that Buddhan

<sup>1</sup> "The guiding principles that governed the life of Abd-ul-Qadir were love of his neighbour and toleration. Though kings and men of wealth showered their gifts upon him his boundless charity kept him always poor, and in none of his books or precepts are to be found any expressions of ill-will towards the Christians. Whenever he spoke of the people of the book, it was only to express his sorrow for their religious errors, and to pray that God would enlighten them. This tolerant attitude he bequeathed as a legacy to his disciples and it has been a striking characteristic of his followers in all ages." Rinn, quoted by T. W. Arnold, *Preaching of Islam*, pp. 328, 329.

<sup>2</sup> Titus, *Indian Islam*, pp. 124, 143.

won, and in later years retained, the esteem of his sometime pupil. Thus the Islamic strain in Dadu's thought, and especially its strong leanings towards Sufism, may be traced in part at least to the influence of Shaikh Buddhan.

Dadu's debt to both Hinduism and Islam was probably greater than he knew. There is not one of the dominant schools of Hindu philosophy that has not contributed something to his total view of things. His poems are steeped in the language of the Vedānta. His whole thinking is profoundly coloured by the characteristically Hindu conceptions of *māyā*, *karma*, and transmigration. His psychology, like that of every Hindu thinker, be he monist, dualist, or theist, is rooted in the Sāṃkhya and Yoga systems, and never shakes itself free from their fundamental presuppositions. Even his monotheism has more affinity with the fervent devotion of the Hindu *bhakta* than with the stern Islamic doctrine of the unity of God. His fierce intolerance of caste and idolatry, on the other hand, his vivid consciousness of God as Creator, Ruler, and Judge, and his emphasis on moral freedom and responsibility, are part of his Muslim inheritance.

Historically, Dadu stands in the line of the great Ramananda tradition. Dr. J. N. Farquhar notes as typical of the entire school of writers who derive from Ramananda a fondness for monistic words and phrases coupled with a warm attachment to the personality of Rama as supreme God.<sup>1</sup> In this Dadu is a true disciple of Ramananda. The fact that the Dadu Panth could thus trace a genuine historical link with so famous and influential a school of Vishnu worshippers goes far to explain much of its later history.

But incomparably the most powerful influence in the moulding of Dadu's thought was the teaching of Ramananda's Muhammadan disciple, Kabir. There is indeed no evidence of the existence in Rajputana at this early date of an organised Kabir Panth, but the hymns and sayings of Kabir were already widely known, and many of his unforgettable couplets had passed into the common speech. It may also be mentioned that the Kabir with whose teaching Dadu was familiar stands much nearer to the historical figure of a century earlier than the Kabir of modern tradition. There is in general use among Dadu's

<sup>1</sup> *Outline of the Religious Literature of India*, p. 326.



present-day followers ■ collection of devotional writings popularly known as the *Panch Bani*, or Five Sacred Books.<sup>1</sup> The contents vary, but always include, in addition to Dadu's own *Bani*, the poems of Namdev and Kabir. It may well be that the poems of Kabir included in this collection are substantially those which were known to Dadu and his first disciples. It was in the early days of the movement that interest in Kabir was at its height, and Dadu's followers were wont to speak of their master ■ a "second Kabir". Later, with the growth of their respective Panths, the two movements drew apart and their adherents began to hold jealously aloof from one another, the one claiming for Dadu a spiritual eminence equal to, if not surpassing that of Kabir, the other viewing the younger sect from ■ superior altitude ■ ■ mere offshoot of their own, with no accredited teacher. One result of this widening breach, which continues to the present day, is that the voluminous later literature of the Kabir Panth, much of it uncritically ascribed to Kabir himself, with its advanced theosophical tendencies, has never found a place in the devotional manual of the Dadu Panth.

References to Kabir are frequent in the *Bani*.

Very dear to me is the true word of Kabir.

To hear it is pure bliss: greatly do I delight in it.

(*Shabda*, 34.)

The true hero is he who is courageous in his inmost soul,  
Who vanquishes the hostile army of the passions. Such an one was  
Kabir in this age of darkness.

(*Surātan*, 53.)

Many of Dadu's own couplets are simply variants of well-known sayings attributed to Kabir. A few parallel quotations will make this clear.

*Kabir*

For Hindu and Turk there is one path, so the Satguru has taught.  
Says Kabir: Listen, O Sants<sup>2</sup>; cry "Rama", cry "Khuda": it is one.

(*Bijak. Shabda*, 10.)

<sup>1</sup> Obviously modelled ■ the *Pāñch Granth*, or Five Scriptures of the Sikhs.

■ Devotee, saint,



*Dadu*

Call Him Allah, call Him Rama. Leave the branches and grasp the root.

Take the name of Allah Rama, and consume thy deeds. Why be borne off on the way of falsehood?

(*Pad*, 395.)

*Kabir*

That I know Him to be One, what cause of grief is that to others? If I am dishonoured, I have lost my own honour: others need pay no heed.

(*Adi Granth. Gauri*, 3.)

*Dadu*

Take heed to thine own ways, and leave mine to me.

Thy concern is with thine own affairs, whatever way I take.

(*Sach*, 62.)

*Kabir*

Diamonds are not found in bags, nor sandal trees in rows;

Lions do not live in herds, nor sadhus walk in companies.

(*Bijak. Sakhi*, 173.)

*Dadu*

The sandal tree is not planted at large through the forests;

The diamond is brought from distant parts, but common stones are plentiful.

(*Bhesh*, 15, 16.)

*Kabir*

Rama's cliff is very high: thereon Kabir has climbed.

Men say to me: "O Kabir, come down. You have with you neither provision nor guide."

(*Sakhi*, 31, 32.)

*Dadu*

The way of Kabir is in the heights: none can follow it.

Says Dadu: He that would bound as a deer after him falls to earth again.

(*Madhi*, 17.)

*Kabir*

Kabir, slight is the stroke of a lance: though struck by it man may breathe for a time;

But he who can endure the stroke of the Word is a guru, and I am his slave.

(*Adi Granth. Shlok*, 183.)

*Dadu*

All behold what is outward; He has broken me in pieces within;  
The Satguru has smitten me with His Word. Wisdom is not found  
afar.

(*Gurudev*, 25.)

These extracts sufficiently indicate the freedom with which Dadu makes use of the sayings of Kabir. Here two important facts have to be borne in mind. The first is the amazing force and originality of Kabir. For sheer vigour of thought and rugged terseness of style, no later *bhakti* writer can be brought into comparison with him. Assuredly Dadu lays no claim to such originality, either of thought or expression. He comes before us, not as an original poet, but as a religious teacher with a burning message to deliver. His mind is saturated in the sayings of Kabir. In quoting them, or even re-clothing them in a new dress, there is no suggestion of conscious plagiarism.

To Him who was Lord of Kabir is my soul wedded.  
In thought, word, and deed, I acknowledge no other.

(*Piw Pichhan*, 11.)

The second fact to be emphasised is that, profound as is Dadu's reverence for Kabir, his attitude is not that of a disciple to his guru. Kabir is ranked with Namdev, Pipa, Sena, Raidas and others as among those who have found the true way.

Those who have attained have left their message: all say one thing.  
All the instructed are of one faith, all are of one caste.

(*Sach*, 189.)

Humbly Dadu takes his stand in that spiritual succession. Nowhere is Kabir spoken of as his religious teacher. His teacher is Rama, Govinda, Allah: the Divine Teacher of Namdev, Kabir, and all the saints.

Poor Kabir spoke his message and passed on, having given many  
wise counsels.

Says Dadu: the world is mad: go not thou after it.

(*Sach*, 185.)

Namdev, Kabir the weaver, the man Raidas—all found the way of  
salvation.

Says Dadu: there is no delay. Through Hari all obstacles are done away.

(*Pad*, 296: 3.)

Kabir has had many lifeless imitators, but Dadu is not one of them. He is in fact not a conscious imitator at all. We have dwelt on points of resemblance, but, despite many obvious affinities, his standpoint is by no means identical with that of Kabir. This is seen, for example, in Dadu's habitual use of the name Niranjana for the Supreme Being, a terminology which Kabir never employs. For Kabir, Niranjana is himself a created and therefore secondary being—a kind of demiurge—the God of popular worship, in whose bondage all are held. In the teaching of the modern Kabir Panth Niranjana is definitely assigned to the "fifth realm"—that is, above the realm of the three gods of the Hindu triad, and of Shakti (the divine creative energy, represented as a goddess), and below the Abode of the True. When the fullest allowance has been made for the tendency of Kabir's later followers to foist upon him the elaborate cosmogony of the modern Panth, there can be no doubt that the germ of this idea was already present in the genuine poems of Kabir.<sup>1</sup>

I create, I kill, I burn, and I devour;  
Indwelling in water and in earth: my name is Niranjan.

(*Kabir. Ramaini*, 21: 6.)

Niranjan is invisible, none can see him: in his bondage all are bound. The falsehood in which they are bound is manifest: they think the false to be true.

He has bound all fast and made them serve with ritual. Exempt from himself he lives aloof.

(*Ramaini*, 22: 1-3.)

The doctrine here vaguely adumbrated is fully expounded in the later poems attributed to Kabir by the modern Panth.

In his use of the name Niranjana, Dadu departs entirely from the usage of Kabir. Niranjana is for him invariably a title of the

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller account of Kabir's teaching, see the Rev. F. E. Keay's *Kabir and his Followers*, and the Introduction to the Rev. Ahmad Shah's translation of the *Bijak*. "Kabir teaches in many passages that God is not the Creator of the universe. This is the creation of Niranjan, and Niranjan was created by God" (Ahmad Shah, p. 38).

Supreme Being. The invocation with which each section of the *Bani* opens begins with the words: "Worship (be paid) to Niranjana." Even if it be regarded as an editorial addition, such a formula could hardly have been used unless it had been frequently on Dadu's lips. This is entirely borne out by the constantly recurring use of the name, always in the same sense, throughout the hymns and poems.

Those who, engrossed in divine things, eat the morsel that comes  
unasked,

Who call upon the name of Niranjana, such are the true sadhus.

(*Bishwas*, 36.)

Gone are home and wealth, gone, in a moment, wife and child;  
Gone father and mother, gone kinsmen and friends;  
Gone self, gone other, gone the world's varied delights.  
Worship, worship, O heart, the Supreme God Niranjana.

(*Maya*, 46.)

He protests against the use of the name in the service of  
idolatry.

The impure (*anjan*) they style the Pure (*Niranjana*),<sup>1</sup> the conditioned the Unconditioned.

What they themselves have set up they represent as the Self-Sufficient. How can the heart acknowledge Him?

They prate of Niranjana, while within is defilement (*anjan*).

Their heart acknowledges Him not. They pass (on death) to the upper or lower world (i.e. to the abode of the gods or demons, not to the pure realm of Niranjana).

(*Maya*, 143, 144.)

Were the difference one merely of words and names, it would be of comparatively little importance. In reality, it goes deeper. The cosmology of Kabir may be much simpler than that of the modern Kabir Panth, but his fanciful and often obscure account of the origin of things is in forcible contrast to Dadu's clear and emphatic doctrine of creation.

<sup>1</sup> The word may be interpreted either as *ni-ranjana*, void of passion, or as *nir-anjana*, free from stain, unsullied. The two ideas are never dissociated in Dadu's mind, but his frequent use of the word *anjan* by way of contrast, shows that the latter was the one consciously present to his thought.



By a single word He created all things, so great is His power,  
 'Tis he that is lacking in power who creates first one thing, and  
 then another. (Shabda, 10.)

Kabir speaks of those who confound the Maker or Doer (*Kartā*, *Kartār*) with the Creator (*Sṛjanhāra*).

Rama, who was named Maker, even him Death did not spare.

(Kabir. Shabda, 90: 4.)

The word Maker is of course used here ironically. The Maker spoken of is Rama, the incarnation of Vishnu, and hero of the *Ramāyana*.

Dead is Krishna, dead is the Maker. Only One did not die, the Creator.

(Kabir. Shabda, 45: 4.)

Such phraseology is never used by Dadu even in jest. For him Doer and Creator are one. Even the doctrine of *māyā*, or illusion, is overshadowed by the thought of God as Creator and Doer.

What Thou hast done is, what Thou wilt do shall be;

Doer and Cause alike art Thou: there is no other.

Not we the doers, the Doer is another.

The Doer will accomplish all: take not upon thyself the part of doer.

(Bishwas, 4, 52.)

Again, Dadu is much more interested than Kabir in the successive stages of the soul's pilgrimage as worked out by the Sufis. He is fond of sublimating both philosophical theory and ritual practice, seeking to get beyond the outward symbol to the thing signified. He is more ready than Kabir to acknowledge that the God of his worship is the God to whom Vedas and Quran, in their own degree, bear witness though pandits and mullahs may wear themselves out studying them without learning their secret. He does indeed speak of a region where "Vedas and Quran cannot come" (16: 32): "not here is Niranjana's dwelling" (13: 98). Without God's direct self-manifestation in the heart no scripture can be accepted as a "revelation"

of divine truth. But his rejection of the sacred books is less sweeping than Kabir's; they are not classed with pilgrimage, fasting, alms, etc., ■ mere "cloaks of falsehood" (*Bījak. Shabda*, 113).

In temperament the contrast between Kabir and Dadu is still more strongly marked. In Dadu there is less of the fierce iconoclast, and more of the quiet mystic; less fondness for the bold conceit and startling paradox, and more for the great simple truths that shine by their own light; less delight in the keen battle of wits, the rapier thrust and skilful parry, and more in the patient undermining by instruction, warning, and appeal, of the false defences in which the soul is tempted to take refuge. The *Bani* of Dadu is an intimate personal record; it reflects, to an extent greater than can be said of the poems of Kabir, the author's own spiritual struggles and victories. The didactic passages, which make up so considerable a portion of the whole, are the fruit of long and serious reflection on the meaning and mystery of human life. There is a wistfulness in Dadu's outlook which we often miss in the vigorous utterances of Kabir. It is as a controversialist that Kabir rises to his supreme heights; he is never so much at home ■ in the forefront of the battle with falsehood and error, giving blow for blow. With Dadu it was otherwise. A valiant witness for the truth, scorning compromise and dauntless in face of opposition and persecution, he had no love for strife and debate. His mission was that of the friend, the helper, the patient teacher. One has difficulty in thinking of Kabir, for all his ardent proclamation of the doctrine of human brotherhood, earning for himself the title of "Dayāl", the tender-hearted, the pitiful. It was in that character that Dadu won a unique place in the hearts of multitudes of simple folk throughout the towns and villages of Jaipur and Marwar, and far beyond. It is still as Dadu Dayal, the kindly Dadu, that he is universally known to his admirers to-day. If we are to speak of Dadu as the successor, or (if we choose) as a "disciple" of Kabir, it is beyond anything else to his practical exemplification of the law of human brotherhood that we must look for his distinctive contribution to the understanding of Kabir's message. If on him has fallen the mantle of Kabir, it is as the mantle of the stern prophet of Carmel on the kindly Elisha.

2. THE TEXT OF THE *BANI*

For three centuries the collected hymns and poems of Dadu known as the *Bani*, or Oracles, existed only in manuscript. Owing to its sacrosanct character the volume was not readily accessible, and outside the immediate circle of Dadu's followers was comparatively little known. Within the last half-century a change has taken place. A number of more or less reliable texts have been published, and the *Bani* now commands a considerable body of readers who have no formal connection with the Dadu Panth.

The first printed edition of Dadu's works appeared in 1904, issued by the Gyānsāgar Press, Bombay. This was followed in 1906 and 1907 by the publication of a complete text of the *Bani* in two volumes by the Nāgarī Prāchārini Sabhā of Kāshi (Benares). In the latter year appeared also the scholarly edition of Rai Sahib Pandit Chandrika Prasād Tripāthī, printed at the Vaidik Yantrālaya, Ajmer, which has won general acceptance as the standard text. In addition to a carefully edited text, this volume contains much valuable material in the way of critical and expository notes, glossary, and reference index. The references throughout this book are to the Ajmer text. In 1924 a complete text of the *Bani*, based on Pandit Chandrika Prasad's work, but without commentary and notes, was published by the Belvedere Press, Allahabad. In this the spelling has been to some extent modernised.

Numberless manuscript copies of the *Bani*, some old, many of fairly recent date, are still in circulation. The text of these is on the whole remarkably uniform. For devotional purposes the sentiment of the worshipper clings as a rule to the written page. As in Christian monasteries, the copying of the sacred text was an act of devotion on which much time and labour were spent. In long-established *dwāras* or temples the sacred volume, placed in the central shrine, is often very old, and is seldom removed from its place for purposes of study or exposition. In the inner precincts of the temple at Naraina reposes what is believed to be a very ancient manuscript, but to this the visitor is denied access. Very early texts are also said to be preserved at Ranila, in the Punjab, and at Narnaul, in Patiala State.



Until the earliest extant manuscripts are made available for critical study, it is impossible to determine precisely the date at which the text of the *Bani* became finally fixed. Great pains have obviously been taken to preserve the original text, and any interpolations or emendations that occur must have taken place very early. The five manuscripts on which the Ajmer text is based are all comparatively recent, the oldest being dated A.D. 1779 (Samvat 1836). The editor states, however, that he had the opportunity of examining earlier texts in the possession of others. The oldest manuscript the present writer has seen<sup>1</sup> bears the date Samvat 1718 (i.e. A.D. 1661). The text shows no important variation from those now current. Thus, even with our present knowledge, we can say that the *Bani* had assumed its present shape within half a century of Dadu's death. When a careful scrutiny of early texts can be made, it will doubtless be found that the date can be put back still further. In view of indubitable traces of the redactor's hand in the other early literature of the Panth, this conclusion is of great importance for the student of the *Bani*. Its peculiar sanctity secured for it an immunity from later editorial revision not enjoyed by the works of Dadu's disciples.

The uniform tradition is that Dadu did not commit his poems to writing. His utterances were diligently recorded by certain of his disciples, as well as committed to memory by many who heard them. The names of Rajjab, a Muhammadan disciple, and of Tilā, Mohan the scribe, Jagannāth, and Sant Dās, are specially mentioned in this connection. These writings, preserved on loose sheets, were afterwards carefully collated and supplemented from other sources. To Rajjab, whose own poems were highly esteemed and widely used during Dadu's lifetime, is ascribed the edition in which the *Bani*, or Oracles, are arranged in *angas* or chapters.<sup>2</sup> In this text the sayings of Dadu are grouped according to subject, each under its appropriate title or sub-title. Couplets already included in one chapter are not repeated where they occur in another, as they frequently do. The short poems and hymns, which form the second portion of the *Bani*, are similarly grouped, in this case with others

<sup>1</sup> In the possession of Purohit Hari Narayan, B.A., Jaipur.

<sup>2</sup> Known as the *angabandhu Bāni*.



intended to be sung to the same tune. An examination of Rajjab's own works shows that these were arranged in exactly the same way, the titles of the several chapters being in many cases identical with those of Dadu's *Bani*.<sup>1</sup>

Another variety of text, traditionally ascribed to Jagannath and Sant Das,<sup>2</sup> has the same division into *angas* or chapters, but there are no sub-titles, as in Rajjab's edition. Also, relevant *sākhīs*, or couplets, are repeatedly quoted in a variety of different contexts. Copies of the early "loose-leaf" texts are said to be still in existence.

The *Bani* falls into two broad divisions.

A. The *Sākhī* (*sākshī*, witness) consisting of between two and three thousand rhyming couplets<sup>3</sup> divided into thirty-seven *angas* or chapters, varying in length from ten or fifteen to nearly 200 verses. This portion of the *Bani* is mainly, though by no means wholly, expository and didactic in character. Below are given the titles of the several chapters:

- |                        |                                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. The Divine Guru     | 17. Grasp of Essentials        |
| 2. Remembrance         | 18. Reflection                 |
| 3. Separation          | 19. Faith                      |
| 4. Spiritual Knowledge | 20. Recognition of the Beloved |
| 5. Silent Meditation   | 21. The Almighty               |
| 6. The Bewildered      | 22. The Word                   |
| 7. Fervent Devotion    | 23. The Living Dead            |
| 8. Renunciation        | 24. Heroism                    |
| 9. Admonition          | 25. Destruction                |
| 10. The Mind (Heart)   | 26. The Living One             |
| 11. Inward Birth       | 27. The Tester                 |
| 12. Illusion           | 28. Origins                    |
| 13. Truth              | 29. Mercy and Goodwill         |
| 14. The Sadhu's Robe   | 30. The Beautiful              |
| 15. Discipleship       | 31. The Musk Deer              |
| 16. Impartiality       | 32. Reproach                   |

<sup>1</sup> This method seems to have been in general use at the time, as convenient for devotional study. A similar classification of Kabir's poems, for example, is found not only in the devotional manual of the Dadu Panth to which reference has already been made, but also in certain collections of the poems of Kabir used by the Kabir Panthis.

■ Called the *hardebandhu Bānī*.

■ *Dohā, chaupāī, or sorathā*.

- |                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 33. The Graceless      | 36. The Creeper     |
| 34. Supplication       | 37. The Inseparable |
| 35. The Inward Witness |                     |

B. The *Shabda* (Word), consisting of nearly 450 hymns and short poems, composed in a great variety of well-known metres, and arranged according to the particular tune to which they are sung. This portion of the *Bani* is primarily devotional: its appeal to the religious emotions is simple and direct. Unlike the *Sakhis*, which are loosely strung together often with little regard to context, each of these short poems is complete in itself, and has the advantage of having been preserved exactly as Dadu spoke it. For both these reasons the hymns of Dadu have always had a special appeal to readers of the *Bani*, though for a study of Dadu's teaching the *Sakhi* are perhaps even more valuable.

In manuscript copies of the *Bani* the *angas* or chapters are not numbered. In accordance with the usual practice in vernacular works, the *Sakhis* or couplets are numbered consecutively throughout, being totalled at the end of each section to ensure that no mistake has occurred in copying. The songs and poems included in each musical group are numbered, but the groups themselves are not numbered. In the printed Ajmer text, for the convenience of the reader, a number is given to each *anga*, or chapter, and the *sakhis* or couplets included in it are numbered separately.<sup>1</sup> Each *rāg* or musical group is also numbered, but in this section the hymns are also numbered consecutively from first to last.

<sup>1</sup> This practice is also followed in some more recent manuscript volumes.

## Chapter Seven

### SELECTED PASSAGES FROM THE *BANI*

THE passages here rendered into English have of necessity been much abbreviated. This is due not merely to considerations of space, but also to the editorial arrangement of the *Bani*. For didactic purposes the method of grouping together under one heading a large number of verses—some of them mere variants—spoken on different occasions has obvious advantages, but it naturally results in a good deal of rather wearisome reiteration. This renders a large part of the *Bani* (with, of course, the exception of the hymns) unsuitable for quotation *in extenso*. There are indeed numerous continuous, or apparently continuous, passages, but, generally speaking, the present arrangement of the verses affords little clue to the order in which they were spoken. Even when they exhibit a certain unity the sequence of ideas is for the most part extremely casual, and the transition from one topic to another is often very abrupt.

In the examples that follow an effort has been made to preserve the unity of theme by printing the verses selected in unbroken sequence, except where a change of subject is indicated by asterisks. The verses are numbered as in the Ajmer text. No rendering in English prose can do justice to the poetical quality of Dadu's unstudied, but not unmusical, verse. The student of the *Bani* at first hand will most fully appreciate the difficulty of presenting Dadu's thought in terms at once faithful to the original, and readily intelligible to the ordinary English reader. But a simple prose version may be more in harmony with the quiet dignity of the original than the kind of doggerel verse which is sometimes offered as an alternative.

The ascription of praise with which each chapter opens is reproduced only in the first extract given below. In the original it constitutes verse 1 of every chapter.

THE DIVINE GURU  
(*Gurudeva*)

1. Worship be paid to Niranjana, homage to the Divine Guru,  
Obedience to all saints, obeisance to those who have attained.
2. The Supreme Being, the Eternal, He is my God, Niranjana,  
Unimaged, Unsullied: to Him Dadu does reverence.
3. Miraculously<sup>1</sup> the Divine Guru met with me: I received the  
token of His favour;  
He placed His hand on my head, and taught me things un-  
approachable, unsearchable.
4. Many are the blessings the Satguru has freely bestowed.  
The poor has He enriched: ■ bounteous Guru have I found.
5. Without effort I found the Satguru: He clasped me to His breast;  
The Compassionate had pity on me: He awoke me and gave me  
a lamp.
6. Lo, the Guru has shown the way to the Merciful One;  
Key in hand, he has opened every door.
7. Dispelling their darkness He has opened the closed eyelids;  
The ears of the deaf hear, the dumb begin to speak.
8. The Satguru gives to the soul head and hands, eyes and ears;  
Renewing body, mind and behaviour, He bestows hearing and  
sight, taste and speech.
9. Teaching the name of Rama, the symbol of approach to the  
unapproachable,  
The Satguru has given all, uniting the soul with the very Self.
10. Turning the mind about, the Satguru has fashioned it anew;  
Transforming the five senses, what a wondrous change He has  
wrought.
11. When the Satguru is found, He puts all to rights;  
Taking the soul aboard He bears it to the other side.
12. The Satguru makes of the beast a man; the man becomes a saint,  
The saint ■ god, and the god very Niranjana.
13. He snatched me from the jaws of Death, giving sight to the  
blind;  
I have found a Guru who can transform the soul into Brahma.
14. He snatched me from the jaws of Death, speaking the Word in  
my ears;  
I have found ■ Guru who restores the dead to life.

<sup>1</sup> Or, in the secret place.



15. He snatched me from the jaws of Death, making the dumb to speak;  
I have found ■ Guru in whom I am supremely blessed.
16. He snatched me from the jaws of Death, drawing near in kindness and pity;  
I have found a Guru whose glory cannot be told.
17. The Satguru drew me forth by the hair when I was drowning in the world-ocean;  
Taking me aboard, he bore me to the opposite shore.
18. Just as I was ready to sink in the sea of life the Satguru came and rescued me;  
I have found the Boatman Guru, who has taken me aboard.
19. Says Dadu: To that Divine Guru I offer myself in sacrifice;  
Where was the throne of the Deathless, the Ineffable, there did He set me.

■ \* \*

24. Uttering the Word, the Satguru awakens the soul at will;  
At will He speaks within, uniting it to Himself.
25. All behold what is without: He has broken me in pieces within.  
The Satguru has smitten me with His Words. Wisdom is not to be found afar.
26. With the Word has the Satguru smitten me, carefully directing His aim;  
Now Rama alone remains: there is no thought of another.
27. I have found peace through the Word of the Saint, the wisdom of the Guru;  
Having learned the way of enlightenment I have attained the state of bliss.
28. Arrow-like the Word of the Saintly Guru flies in all directions;  
It arouses the sleeper, and he whom it smites finds salvation.
29. The Satguru has spoken the Word with His mouth, be the mark near or far;  
The disciple has heard with his ears, and is stirred to remembrance of God.

\* \* ■

66. There ply the rosary of the mind (heart) where is no succession of night and day;  
There, where the Guru has bestowed the robe of the ascetic, quietly perform thy devotions.

■

67. There ply the rosary of the mind, where the Beloved is seated near;  
Through the Guru the unapproachable has become approachable: I have found the abode of light.
68. There ply the rosary of the mind, where is the One Infinite Self;  
Without effort have I found the Satguru, with whom is age-long Spring.
69. The Satguru has given the mind a rosary: recollection the cord on which, like beads, the vital airs are threaded;  
Without hands tell thy beads night and day. This is the highest worship.
70. The mind has inwardly become a faqir: it has donned the mendicant's garb within;  
It holds fast to the Word of the Divine Guru, and begs the ineffable alms.
75. This the mosque, this the temple: so the Satguru has taught.  
The true worship and service are within: why go without?
76. Within is the disciple, within the Guru: the teaching also is within;  
Binding their matted hair in knots the foolish seek them outside.
77. Says Dadu: Shave the head of the mind, the locks of lust and anger,  
Shave off fleshly desire, through the teaching of the Satguru.

■   \*   \*

95. Let no disciple take his own way, transgressing the word of the Satguru;  
For Kāl<sup>1</sup> dogs his every footstep, and will devour him where-soever he goes.
96. If the disciple does what the Satguru forbids, how can he escape from Kal?  
Gazing about him he is swept away like a river that has burst its dam.
97. If the disciple does as the Satguru bids him, all will be well with him;  
He will reach that immortal, fearless state where Kal cannot touch him.
98. Let us do nothing that ■ displeasing to the Master,  
For thus is the Satguru put to shame, and none will acknowledge his discipline.

<sup>1</sup> Death, destruction.

103. The wise disciple is he who owns even the seeming faults of the Guru as virtues.

How should the Satguru be at fault? He that understands this is a man of judgment.

104. What grudge does the goldsmith bear the gold when he bruises it with his hammer?

He frees it from all blemishes, that it may be worn about the neck.

105. Place the gold in water: its impurities are not removed.

By the teaching of the Guru the disciple is purified by fire.

106. With kindly inward intent, though outwardly stern,

The Satguru instructs his disciple. This is the witness of all the saints.

■ \* \*

107. Let the disciple have confidence in himself, and speak with understanding;

What he says will come to pass—if first we cry to God.

108. Do as the Satguru bids you, if you are a wise disciple.

Whither he has brought you, there remain steadfast: why ask foolish questions?

109. The Guru speaks first with the mind, then with a glance of the eye;

If the disciple fails to understand, he instructs him at last by word of mouth.

110. He that understands the spoken word is a common man; he that interprets a gesture is an initiate;

He that reads the thought of the mind, unsearchable, unfathomable, is a god.

111. My tongue is for ever speaking: your ears are continually hearing;

But what can the poor Satguru do, if his pupil is an ignorant fool?

112. In ■ single word the Satguru has said all, instructing his disciple;

But if the disciple remains not where his teacher has brought him, he must needs come again and again to ask.

113. He has been taught, he has heard all his teacher's counsels, but his mind remains impure.

What can the poor Guru do, when the disciple drinks continually the poison of the senses?

■

114. He comprehends not the Satguru's words: nothing springs up  
in his own heart.  
What can be done, when the mind is in such evil case?

■       \*       ■

146. There is endless instruction in a single word, when the Satguru  
speaks:  
With his master-key he opens every door.
147. Without effort all is accomplished, when the Creator stands  
revealed.  
Weighed down with sacred lore, one may strive for a lifetime  
and achieve nothing.
148. As in the presence of the sun the burning-glass reveals its  
hidden fire,  
So, in the company of the saints, the Lord with ease makes His  
presence known in the hearts of His servants.
150. How many in this dark age have become immortal through  
the Guru's teaching:  
How many are continually perishing for lack of it.
151. If one takes physic but follows no rules of diet, how can the  
mortal sickness be cured?  
The sick man is mad who throws the blame on the physician.
152. The physician examines him and tells him what is wrong, but  
the invalid is displeased.  
While he thus obstinately clings to it, how can his disease be  
cured?
153. What can the poor physician do when the sick man does not  
deal fairly with him?  
My child demands sweet things and sour, and all manner of  
' savoury dishes.

\*       \*       \*

156. Birds, beasts, the trees of the forest—all have I made my Guru;  
The three worlds formed of the modes<sup>1</sup> and the five elements—  
for God is in them all.
157. That which the Satguru first spoke I have now beheld with my  
own eyes.  
Meeting the Lord face to face Dadu is fully content.

<sup>1</sup> *Guna*.



SUPPLICATION

(*Bintī*)

12. In many bonds is this wretched soul bound.  
Of its own strength it cannot escape. The Beloved is the Deliverer.
  13. Dadu is the prisoner, Thou the Master who sets him free.  
Keep me no longer in bondage, O gracious Lord.
  14. The heart is soiled within: it is full of clamant desires.  
Reveal and take them wholly away: this is Dadu's cry.
  15. All things possess me, O Rama: nothing departs.  
What should I hide from Thee? Behold all that is within.
  16. When a mighty thorn is lodged in the mind, how can one forget Rama?  
How am I to endure this pain? Help me, O Lord.
  17. Keep Thou, O Keeper, keep this heart of mine.  
There is no other but Thou: the saints bear witness.
  18. Let my mind flee from illusion and the distractions of sense;  
Make it such, O Lord, that it may delight in Thee.
  21. Give me those eyes by which the self beholds the Self.  
Grant me, O my Master, this boon, that Dadu may behold Thee.
  25. Give me each day new devotion, each day a new Name by which to call Thee;  
Give me each day new love. I offer myself in sacrifice.
  26. Lord, give me true contentment, love, devotion, trust;  
Give me uprightness, patience, truth: this does Thy servant Dadu beg.
  27. Lord, take away my misgivings, destroy my doubts,  
Dispel the error, the suspense, the awful pain. Make me truly one with Thee.
- \* \* \*
28. That which "is not" is manifest: that which "is" remains hidden.  
Lord, draw aside the curtain: come and reveal Thyself.
  29. Illusion is manifest; if Rama were even so,  
Then would all souls in every place rejoice in His presence.
  33. All souls may break loose from Rama, but Rama breaks not loose from them:  
Even ■ the raw thread (on the spinning wheel) is no sooner broken than mended.

36. When with ardent desire and singleness of mind Thy servant  
makes his supplication,  
When face to face he pours out his soul, then is he made one with  
Thee.
37. O Lord, I fear Thee: ever do I stand in awe of Thee.  
As the goat trembles in presence of the lion, so has Thou van-  
quished me.
38. In a moment He in truth reveals Himself, if His worshipper  
cries to Him;  
When He beholds the humble in affliction, then is He greatly  
moved.
39. He accompanies him behind and before, taking his burden upon  
Himself.  
When the saint suffers, then does Hari suffer: such is the Creator.
- \* \* \*
64. Mighty Upholder, take this chariot upon Thy shoulders and  
bear it across;  
Leave it not in the way, else will Thy glory be put to shame.
67. Thou alone art the Knower of hearts, the Stay of the spirit.  
If Thou withdrawest Thy hand, then who will sustain it?
73. Make us even as Thou art: then shall our souls be set free.  
Make us not such as we ourselves are. I offer myself in sacrifice  
to the Beloved.
74. The Hope of the fatherless, the Stay of the helpless,  
The Wealth of the destitute, is Rama the Creator.
75. Dadu stands at the Master's door and cries night and day:  
Be gracious, O my Lord: O Master, grant me the vision.
76. Dadu is athirst for love: O Lord Rama, give me to drink;  
Fill the cup before mine eyes, and give life to the dead.
77. O Allah, Lord of Light, ever fill the cup and give me to drink;  
Make me to drink of Thy love: intoxicate me with it.
78. Many hast Thou such as I: I have no other such as Thou.  
Cast not Dadu away: remain Thou before mine eyes.
80. Only through Thee can I meet with Thee, and that in a single  
moment.  
Never of myself can this thing be, though a thousand ages pass.
83. What was pleasing to Thee was one thing: what I have done is  
another.  
If Thou wilt have mercy, grant me release: else is there no place  
left for me.

84. What was pleasing to myself have I done, not what I have done  
please.  
Dadu is a sinner: I have beheld my mind within.
85. Do with me as Thou wilt: I surrender myself to Thee.  
If it please Thee, pardon Thy servant; if it please Thee, lay hold  
of him and slay him.
86. Says Dadu: If the Lord should call me to account, then would  
he behead and impale me,  
If, of His goodness and compassion, He forgives, then do I live  
indeed.

TRUTH

(*Sāch*)

20. Whose I was, His have I become. In what am I to blame?  
Be not angry, my friend, with the servant and his service.
32. If we fail to observe the prescribed ritual, what is that to thee,  
brother?  
, There is no partnership in worship: why, pray, dost thou care  
orders?
33. Seek release from thine own doings, not from those of another,  
Let that man cry out with pain whose is the inward suffering.
34. If one eats to satiety, how should the hungry man be thereby  
satisfied?  
Because another's hour has struck, why should you or I die?
35. The leaking boat is on the sea, all are on the point of drowning,  
Each takes his own life in his hands and flees the wreck.
36. Each must answer for himself. Who, pray, shall do it him?  
Let each speak the truth he knows, for that is well-pleasing to the  
Lord.
62. Take heed to thine own ways, and leave mine to me,  
Thy concern is with thine own affairs, whatever way I may take.

■ ■ ■

64. They compose a few verses and a *valhi* or two.  
We have found enlightenment, they say: we are of the wise men  
of the world.
65. Hearing books of wisdom read, they become retailers of it.  
At once they are full of self-importance: there is none like us,  
they say.

■

66. Of what use is their wisdom to anyone? Rather it is a source of trouble to all.

Better that they should hear the wisdom of the true saint, and savour its quality like Shesha with his thousand tongues.

67. They string together verses and utter *sakhis*, but the soul forsakes not worldly pleasures.

If thou churnest water, how shall butter come forth?

68. What avails the multiplying of verses and repeating of *sakhis* If one has not discovered the secret of the Lord, the true Jewel?

69. The mind delights in talking and listening: doing is quite another matter;

But darkness is not dispelled by words: there must needs be ■ lamp, and wick, and oil.

70. Doers we are not, but brave talkers we are.

With us, talk is always near, doing far away.

\* \* \*

122. That man is the servant of Rama who has no thought of any other lord.

No second does he desire, but his one beloved Friend.

123. Each joins the company of his own caste-fellows;  
The servant of Rama knows no such distinctions.

124. The thief, the oppressor, the buffoon, seek one another's society;

The servant of Rama has no dealings with any of them.

127. The ignorant Hindu and Muslim are both in error;  
Only those who are free from partiality consider and grasp the truth.

128. Each fills his vessel with water and calls it his own.  
The water of the One Well dispels error from the mind.

129. They call the water by many names: there are many different castes;

Say, who is He that speaks within, and where is He contained?

130. When thou considerest the perfect Brahma, then are all spirits one;

When thou lookest on bodily attributes, there are castes many and diverse.

■ \* ■

139. He that worships stocks and stones defeats his own purpose;  
—The invisible God dwells within. Why go elsewhere?



140. They lave the stone and drink the water—living souls worship  
images of stone.  
In the end they become as stones: many have been lost through  
this false wisdom.
141. They have bound a stone in their wallet, mistaking it for a  
diamond;  
At the last Hari the Jeweller will find them with nothing to  
show.
142. First one worships an object, then takes on its qualities;  
Finally one becomes that object. Know this for true, says Dadu.
150. All were of one, but that One they knew not;  
They have attached themselves, now to one, now to another.  
This world is mad.

\* \* \*

157. Who ■ worships the true Lord, whose service is true,  
Who finds the true vision, that man is the true servant.
158. The Lord of the true is the bounteous and mighty Creator;  
The earth is given over to deceit, the world to artifice.
161. The deceiver finds not the Beloved, for truth is not in his heart;  
Why be concerned with appearances? cleanse the defilement  
within.
162. Truth abides deathless from age to age: but one in many finds  
it;  
Falsehood abounds in the world: it is of the things that are born  
and die.
163. Falsehood thou mayest change, but truth changes not;  
Commit thyself to the True: such is the counsel of the Saint.
172. Conceal it where thou wilt, truth cannot be hidden;  
In the realm of Shesha, or at the distant Pole Star, know it to be  
manifest.
173. What thou doest secretly will be openly revealed;  
Let none seek a hidden spot in which to do evil.
174. The unwrought deed clings not: 'tis the deed done that clings;  
At the portal of the Lord is justice, according to Rama's good  
pleasure.

■ \* ■

190. Ask of those who have attained: all speak the same word;  
All the saints are of one mind: 'tis those in the midst of the way  
who follow diverse paths.

■

191. All the enlightened have left one message: all who have  
attained have one home.

It is those in the midst of their journey who hold diverse  
opinions.

195. Dadu counsels each one: As thou doest, so shalt thou receive;  
There is no sharing with any: the Lord sees what is in every  
heart.

\* \* \*

#### THE MIND OR HEART

(*Man*)<sup>1</sup>

2. Restrain this mind, O foolish one: keep it hemmed within the  
body.

The mind roves about like a mad elephant: keep it ever in check  
with the goad.

3. When the elephant, the mind, has broken loose it roams at large,  
and can nowise be bound;

Many mahouts have worn themselves out in vain seeking to bring  
it under control.

4. Whence the mind has moved away, there set it once more;  
There fix its devotion, where the saints repeat the teaching of the  
Guru.

5. Little by little bring it into subjection, till it remains in the  
attitude of devotion;

When it has become schooled in meditation, the mind will not  
wander elsewhere.

7. The valiant is he that keeps fast hold on the mind and does not  
let it stray for an instant;

The moment it would move a step he lays hands on it.

8. As many as are the waves of the sea, so many are the impulses of  
the mind.

Stilling them all, be seated with thy whole thought directed  
towards the spirit.

9. If it would speak with the mouth or listen with the ears,  
If it would look with the eyes, enmesh it within.

10. As in presence of the lodestone the iron is attracted,  
So attach thy devotion—mind, moods, and senses—to the One.

<sup>1</sup> "Heart" is often the [redacted] suitable rendering. Dadu frequently uses the Persian  
(and Urdu) word *dil* (heart) in exactly the same sense.

11. When the soul learns the true seat of the mind, then all the stages (of progress) become plain;  
When all five senses are focussed on the One, it knows the secret of all the scriptures.
13. While the mind remains unsteadfast no communion is possible;  
When the mind becomes fixed, with ease will He be found.
16. Intent on the remembrance of Hari, the mind is immovable.  
When it has tasted the nectar of love, it stirs not a single step.

\* \* \*

29. Nothing have I done in which Rama may take pleasure.  
In vain, says Dadu, have I come into this world.
30. What account shall the soul which has ■ offended give of itself?  
This priceless life of mine has been squandered and gone for nothing.
31. The end for which life was given my heart has not attained;  
Without devotion to Hari, life is in bondage to illusion.
32. Withholding obedience I have followed the imaginings of my own mind.  
With what face shall I present myself before the merciful Provider?
33. I have done all for the gratification of the senses: I have given the mind whatever it craved.  
But for the purpose with which He created the world I have done nothing.

\* \* ■

85. Though we wash it with water, O foolish one, the impurity of the mind does not depart;  
Only then will the mind become pure, when it sings the excellencies of Hari.
86. What avails our meditation, if the mind is not pure?  
If in this way any can be reformed, then shall all cranes be saved.
87. What does our meditation avail, if the mind is not cleansed?  
To what end do the crane and the cat meditate, but to prey upon helpless animals?
88. When washed in the river of the heart the mind, from being black, becomes white.  
Living in fellowship with the Lord, with ease it is made pure.
89. He whose mirror is bright beholds the reflection in it;  
He whose glass is soiled cannot ■ his face.

91. This mind of ours is not constant: none knows how to make it so;  
How then can it worship the pure God?
92. This mind is in contact with all three worlds,  
Yet thou guardest thy body, saying, *Let none defile us.*
93. Thou art at pains to guard the body (from pollution), but the  
the mind remains unguarded;  
It desires the noble and the base, it devours good and evil.
94. Thy mouth is full of bones, with skin hanging upon them;  
Within is a tongue of flesh, with which thou eatest.
95. From the nine gates of hell (the orifices of the body) filth exudes  
night and day.  
How shalt thou keep the body pure? Remember Rama and  
sing His praises.
96. Man is bound up with body and mind, with the senses and the  
objects of sense;  
If Brahma lives in the house of a *sudra* (man of low caste), what  
remains of caste-law?

\* \* \*

102. While the mind remains inconstant thou beholdest dreams;  
When it becomes immovably fixed on the Name, dreams visit  
it no more.
103. Wheresoever the waking mind dwells, there will it go when  
asleep;  
Whatsoever things fill the mind, these does it behold.
107. Where thou fixest the mind when living, there shall it go at  
death;  
The dwelling of the soul is where it has hitherto been immersed.
112. As are the desires of the mind, so shall their fruit be in the end;  
When what is ordained has come to pass, it shall come to rest in  
the object of its desire.
113. He whose life is spent in worship, self-discipline, and good  
works, will travel heavenwards;  
He that follows the lusts of his heart will fall into hell, and  
return to earth.
114. That which is sound may become unsound: a man may win  
and then lose the game;  
In the end he grows careless, and his foot slips.
115. This mind, emancipated for the moment, may in a few days be  
enslaved to all things once more;  
Leaving the heavens it descends to earth again.



116. Rare is that mind which, having died, comes not to life again;  
Many there are who return to this world of illusion.
117. All act as they see others do; they reach not the other shore;  
They return time and again, and resume their former state.
- ■   ■
129. The mind has hands and feet, head and mouth and tongue;  
Remembering God's Name with ears and eyes and voice, Dadu  
has found the Beloved.
130. At whose bidding all the members bow, that know to be the  
head;  
At whose bidding they speak, that is the master voice.
131. At whose bidding all hear, that is the disciplined ear;  
At whose bidding they see, that is the enlightened eye.
132. From the mind defilement arises: with the mind cleanse defile-  
ment away;  
Follow the counsels of the saintly Guru: so shalt thou become  
pure.
133. Within the mind illusion arises: within the mind illusion  
departs;  
Within the mind is one intoxicated with Rama, within the  
mind is one immersed in Him.
134. Within the mind death arises, within the mind is death de-  
voured;  
The mind is indestructible while devotedly attached to the  
Master.
135. Before the mind is in the Light, before the mind is the Glory;  
Before the mind is the divine Effulgence, before the mind the  
Throne.
136. By the mind the mind is made steadfast, by the mind the mind  
is directed towards God;  
By the mind the mind is united to Him, and wanders not  
elsewhere.

#### SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

(*Parchā*)<sup>1</sup>

26. Thinking upon Hari, the Wishing Stone, every anxious thought  
passes from the mind.  
Within me have I found the Wishing Stone, and remain  
entranced.

<sup>1</sup> *Parichaya*.

27. When with its eyes the spirit beholds itself,  
There is the Supreme Spirit. If it is whom it beholds.
28. Where without tongue thou speakest, there is the All-Knowing  
Self.  
Without ears does the Lord hear whatsoever worship thou dost  
offer.
38. Where the spirit is, there is Rama: He filleth all things.  
Let the true servant continue in rapt inward devotion.
41. Impalpable is the delicate mansion: it has no village nor place  
nor name.  
There my mind is attached: I offer myself in sacrifice.
42. Giving his heart to the world, a man would know the joy of  
loving communion;  
But there is no room for a second, as no other perfume can per-  
vade the flower.
43. Become nothing and take God's Name: be not thyself called  
anything.  
Nay, betake thee rather to the Master's throne.
44. Where Rama is, there I am not; where I am, there Rama is not;  
The mansion is delicate: it has no place for two.
45. Where I am not, there have I betaken myself, where is One  
alone, and no second.  
For that which "is not," there is ample room in the true abode.
49. That which "is" has many fears, that which "is not" none at all;  
Says Dadu: Continue to be nothing in thy Lord.

\* \* \*

152. All practise the remembrance of God with the body: with the  
spirit, but one in many;  
When, beyond worship with the spirit, there is true union with  
Him, then is real discernment.
153. All understand the worship performed by this body of clay;  
Scarce half know the worship of the spirit; few indeed that of  
the very Self.
154. While the body remains the seat of worship, its contact is with  
material things;  
The seat of the spirit is above fear. Beyond is communion with  
the Self.

156. While remembrance is with the body only, the body seems good;  
When spiritual remembrance springs up, it becomes insipid.  
Beyond is the very Self. What then remains of the (individual)  
soul?
157. Many behold with the eyes of the flesh, but one in many with  
the eyes of the spirit;  
When, through beholding with the eyes of Brahma, spiritual  
enlightenment comes, then see Him enthroned.
158. Let these bodily eyes become the eyes of the spirit;  
Let both be changed into the eyes of Brahma.
159. By bodily knowledge all other bodies are perceived; by inward  
knowledge the inner man;  
By knowledge of Brahma all are seen in Him: Dadu ■ lost in  
wonder.

■ \* ■

179. The spirit is the seat of Rama: there the Lord (Bhagwān)  
dwells;  
There the place where Hari and the spirit meet face to face.
228. The pool of the Presence is within the heart: there do I im-  
merse myself.  
Performing my ablutions before Allah I offer my prayers.
229. Thy body the mosque, the five ■■■■ the congregation, the  
heart the Mullah and Imām,  
There prostrate thyself in worship before the Self, the ineffable  
Allah.
230. With thy whole body as rosary take the name of the Com-  
passionate: let this be thy worship;  
Thy fast, to acknowledge the One, putting from thee every  
other: thy creed, the confession of the Self Alone.
231. All the eight watches let thy meditation be directed towards  
Allah,  
To the very Self beyond the heavens, where the Compassionate  
has His dwelling.
232. All the eight watches, in life and death, offer thy worship;  
Stand and serve at the Master's portal, and never leave it.

■ \* ■

252. Thy servant worships with fear: nothing can I do of myself.  
Even as Thou art, so should Thy worship be: none can perform  
it aright.

•

253. Though the Master should not accept it, yet will I not forsake  
His service.  
All my dependence is on Him: the Lord is invisible,  
incomprehensible.

## THE BEWILDERED

*(Hairān)*

2. The Jewel is one, its assessors many. All alike examine it—  
The dumb, the foolish, the ignorant—but none can assess its value.
3. How many jewellers have sought—wise men and scholars—to  
set a price upon it.  
Think not thou hast found the truth: what account canst thou  
give of it?
6. As Thou art, O Lord, so is Thy Name: declare Thou what Thou  
art;  
Thou alone knowest Thyself: I have no access to such knowledge.
8. The soul that worships Brahma becomes as Brahma.  
He that knows Brahma grows like Him.
9. His infinitude none can grasp: His secret none can declare.  
There is but one Light, and its glory shines in all.
10. No hands or feet has He, no head nor mouth: how then does He  
hear and see?  
As each sees and hears, so does he speak and understand.
11. All say: I have found Him, I have found Him! How many  
profess to show Him.  
But not one has disclosed His secret. Fix thy devotion upon Him.
12. Each has filled his own vessel: this much only does he know;  
Each says his say, declaring what he has discovered of His glory.
13. Concealed within the heart, He reveals not His full infinitude.  
Of all who have come and gone, none has comprehended Him.
14. How shall the dumb tell the taste of sugar, even when he has  
eaten it?  
So the joy of the man who has drunk the nectar of Rama cannot  
be told.
16. But one mouth have I: God's glory is boundless, infinite.  
His excellencies are beyond all reckoning, and leave me lost in  
wonder.
17. The Crown of all perfection, Thou art other than Thy Name;  
Of all who have come and gone, not one has guessed Thy secret.



18. Many have spoken and passed on, but the mystery remains unsolved;  
We too speak, but what can we say more?
19. What do I know, what can I speak, concerning that Mighty One?  
What knowledge have I of His mode of being? it utterly passes my comprehension.
20. How many have spoken and passed on: the wisest have spent their powers in vain.  
His name is not made known by words. All are bewildered.
21. None has seen Him, nor heard, nor can any declare Him;  
None has returned from the other world to tell of Him: there is no compassing of His infinitude.
23. There, is neither silence nor speech, no "I" nor "thou";  
No self or other, neither "one" nor "two".
24. If I say "one", there are two; if I say "two", there is but one;  
Thus is Dadu perplexed. As He is, so do thou behold Him.
26. "As the Doer has made me, such know me to be."  
■ If thou art a wise and mature disciple, let this (confession) be the proof of it.
27. The Magician who devised this play, go and enquire of Him.  
How He fashioned the many from the one, let the Master Himself make plain.

#### MERCY AND GOODWILL

##### *(Dayā Nirbairtā)*

2. Be done with self and worship Hari: cast off worldly desire in mind and body;  
Cherish goodwill towards every living creature. This, says Dadu, is the sum of religion.
4. He is the true saint who bears enmity to none;  
There is but one Spirit, and He has no enemy.
5. I have made diligent quest: truly there is no second.  
In every man is the one Spirit, whether he be Hindu or Musalman.
7. Both brethren have alike hands and feet, both have ears,  
Both brethren have eyes, be they Hindus or Musalmans.
9. When thou lookest in the mirror of doubt there appear to be two;  
When error is dispelled and doubt resolved, there is no other.

10. To whom then wilt thou bear enmity, when there is no other?  
He from whose being all sprang, the same dwells in all.
11. In every man is the one Spirit: hold him therefore in respect;  
*Recognise that spirit in thyself and others: it is the manifestation of the Lord.*
12. Why give pain to any when the indwelling Rama is in every man?  
Seek rather the good of all: this is the duty of the religious man.
14. O Spirit of the Lord,<sup>1</sup> give peace and contentment;  
For there is none but Thee in the fourteen mansions and in the three worlds.
15. When the soul perceives the Self, then are all spirits brethren;  
Give thy heart to Him who is the Creator of all.
18. When the monkey or the dog goes into the palace of mirrors, it  
sees its reflection everywhere;  
The one has become many, and it seeks to destroy itself.
19. All souls are brother-spirits, the offspring of one womb;  
*Consider this truth. Who then is the other, O foolish one?*
24. All came in one likeness: it was the Lord who sent them;  
They took different names, and thus became separated.
26. Worship the Divine Spirit, and bear hatred toward none;  
In worship thou wilt find peace, in hatred sorrow.
30. The throne of God, the habitation of the Immortal,  
The image of the Lord—why shouldst thou destroy it?
32. Adorn this mosque, even man: hold it in reverence.  
The very Self created it: the Musalman throws it down.
33. The creatures of the wild despair of the world;  
Fearing and fearful, they have no secure dwelling by night or by day.
34. God has a covenant with all His creatures, to provide food,  
water, and grass;  
But through lack of spiritual knowledge they know only to destroy.
35. Shame the sword, put it far from thy thoughts;  
All are made in the image of the Most High. O Mullah, slay not the innocent.
38. I behold all the world as one, and all spirits as friends.  
Evil deeds and evil doers come of duality: the Holy One is near to His friends.

<sup>1</sup> *Sāhibī Ki Ātmā*. A remarkable expression.

## THE SADHU'S ROBE

*(Bhesh)*

4. Many great scholars there are, and brave imparters of wisdom;  
Religious garbs are endless. But rarely is one found wholly  
devoted to God's service.
8. Of what use is a vessel of gold, if it be filled with poison?  
A flask of beaten leather is of great value, if filled with the nectar  
of Rama.
9. Says Dadu: Regard the thing itself, and not the vessel that holds  
it;  
My heart contains that which has been poured into it. \*
10. If thou canst understand I will speak: true is the One Ineffable.  
Be done with the leaves and branches and grasp the root. What  
does mere garb signify?
11. Devising all manner of costumes, all display themselves;  
How few take the way of self-effacement and the worship of  
Hari.
15. All the world are actors: rare is the real sadhu,  
Even as the sandal tree is not sown broadcast through the forest.
19. The sandal is not found in forest clumps, nor mighty men in  
droves;  
Diamonds are not brought from every ocean. Even so is the  
sadhu in the world.
22. There is but one Spirit: the Lord is in all:  
Let thy union be with the Lord, not with a sect or mode of dress.
23. Rosaries and sect-marks are of no avail: what have I to do with  
them?  
Within me is One who is mine: day and night I take His Name.
37. All look on the outward appearance, and perceive not what is  
within;  
Outside is what is shown to the world, but Rama reveals Him-  
self within.
42. Hari, the All-Knowing Lord, accepts only what is of the heart.  
To Rama the truth is dear, despite a thousand pretences.
43. Hari receives, not the word spoken by the lips, but the intent of  
the heart.  
When the heart within is right with the One, then there is no  
reproach in speech.

47. Love is the most wondrous of signs, the soul aching for the vision  
of God the true sadhu,  
Patient endurance his token. Such is the teaching of the wise.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE BELOVED

(*Pīw Pichhān*)

2. Behold Him who is over all, Himself subject to none,  
Meditating on this truth, Dadu has laid it to heart.
3. He is the Ruby above all Rubies, lovelier than the most lovely,  
Purer than the most pure: He is the Beloved of Dadu.
7. He who fashioned this vast universe, and set it up without pillars,  
How should He forget us? This is the witness of the saints.
9. He that gave me being, the same is my Master.  
I am the bonds slave of that Rama who created all men.
12. One is Master of all, whose Name is made manifest.  
Seeking that Lord, I offer myself in sacrifice to Him.
13. Seek the true Lord, offer the true devotion,  
Take the true Name, follow the true way.
15. That which is born and dies is the soul, not the all-pervading  
Rama;  
He that is free from birth and death, the same is my Master.
16. Unchangeably one, He rises not nor sets, wakes not nor sleeps;  
The World-Guru neither dies nor lives: all arise and pass away  
in Him.
18. Uncreated is Brahma, He knows neither increase nor decrease;  
Perfect, immovable, eternally the same, He comes not to play a  
part in the world.
19. That which springs up and decays, and is beset with limitations,  
belongs to the world of illusion;  
It has no permanence: it changes every moment, now light, now  
shadow.
20. That which "is not" comes into being; that which "is" is  
uncreated;  
He is incomprehensible, without beginning or end. That which  
comes into being is of illusion.
21. If this soul were the Doer, why should trouble come?  
Why should it be in the power of deeds (*karma*)? Why should it  
have enslaved itself?



22. Why the cycle of re-births into the world as member of ■  
household?  
Why, were it the Doer, has the soul sold itself into the power of  
another?
23. The creature is in the power of Death, and compassed with  
limitations.  
That which springs up and withers even as thou beholdest  
is other than the Doer.
24. The light of Allah is of His own essence: the souls of men shine  
by another's light.  
The creature bows in homage: the Uncreated is wholly free.
32. The imperishable Lord is true: He arises not nor declines;  
All that is in the power of Death is other than He.

\* \* \*

40. The iron mingles with the earth, and is daily consumed by rust;  
Without Rama, the Magic Stone, how can the soul escape  
destruction?
41. At the touch of the Magic Stone the iron is transformed;  
, The soul is changed to gold in fellowship with the Lord.
42. He that can transform a man at a touch, Him do thou make  
thine own.  
The iron becomes gold: such is the power of the Magic Stone.

THE LIVING DEAD  
(*Jīwat Mritak*)

5. Have done with pride and arrogance, conceit, envy, self-assertion;  
Practise humility, obedience; worship the Creator.
7. When a man has abandoned false pride, arrogance, and vainglory,  
When he has become humble and meek, then does he find true  
bliss.
11. Prince and beggar alike must die: not one survives.  
Him do thou call living who has died and yet lives.
12. My enemy "I" is dead: now none can smite me down.  
'Tis I who slay myself: thus, being dead, I live.
14. We have slain our enemy, we have died; but he is not forgotten.  
The thorn remains to vex us. Consider and lay this truth to heart.
15. Then only wilt thou find the Beloved when thou art as the living  
dead;  
Only by losing thyself canst thou find Him who knoweth all.

16. Then wilt thou find the Beloved, when thou esteemest thyself as nothing;  
Recognise therefore by quiet reflection whence the thought of self arises.
20. Becoming as the living dead, come thou into the way.  
First lay down thy head, then mayest thou venture to plant thy foot.
21. Know that the way of discipleship is exceeding hard;  
The living dead walk in it, the Name of Rama their sign.
22. So difficult is the way, no living man can tread it;  
He only can walk in it, O foolish one, who has died and lives.
23. Only he who is dead can tread the way that leads to Niranjana;  
He finds the Beloved, and leaps the fearsome gulf.
25. He that is alive shall die: only by dying inwardly shall he meet the Lord;  
Forsaking His fellowship who can endure when trouble comes?
26. O when will this dominion of self pass away? When will the heart forget every other?  
When will it be wholly refined? When will it find its true home?
36. When I am not, then there is one; when I intrude, then two.  
When the curtain of "I" and "you" is drawn aside, then do I become even as I was.

## FAITH

*(Besās)*<sup>1</sup>

2. Whatsoever Rama has ordained will surely come to pass.  
Why should one fret one's life away? Naught comes of repining.
3. What the Lord has done has come to pass: what He will do shall be;  
Whatsoever the Doer brings to pass comes to pass. Why should any grieve?
5. He alone is my Lord who supplies the needs of all;  
In His hands is the dispensation of life and death.
6. He that created all things in heaven and earth and the lower world from first to last,  
That gives to all their being, He is the object of my worship.
17. Think upon the excellencies of Govinda, who gave thee sight and speech, head and feet,  
Mouth, ears, and hands: the Lord of Life, the God of the World.

■ *Bishvās.*

18. He that endowed thee with body and mind, who orders thy goings and watchest over thee continually,  
That Lord thou rememberest not, setting at naught His commands.
19. Forget not the Master who planted the soul in thy body,  
The Lord who protected thee in the womb, and provides for all thy needs.
20. The Provider stands distributing food with lavish hand.  
The supplier of our wants is altogether near: He is ever with us.
26. Quietly accept such food and shelter ■ the Lord provides;  
What wouldst thou do with more?
27. The contented man eats the morsel freely bestowed;  
Why should the loyal disciple hanker after begged food?
28. Pay reasonable heed to the claims of the body.  
Put from thee all that would separate thee from Hari.
36. Those who, with mind absorbed in divine things, eat of the portion that comes unasked,  
And call upon the name of Niranjana, such are the true devotees.
37. When the unasked portion lies before thee, regard it as a free gift and eat;  
Wander not thither and hither examining the tree and plucking its fruit.
38. If, with the unasked portion before him, he turns back to pick up some other,  
Then is Dadu at fault in rejecting what Rama was pleased to provide.
39. All, all is sweet to my taste, though He give it mixed with poison;  
Dadu calls it not bitter: he accepts it as nectar.
40. Adversity is good, if borne in the name of Hari: trial puts the body to the proof;  
Without Rama, what avail wealth or comfort?
41. Without the one thing, faith, the soul is disquieted;  
Even when the treasure, the priceless Wishing Stone, is near,  
thou wilt find sorrow.
42. The soul without faith is fickle, and has no resting-place;  
It is fixed on nothing sure, but flits from one thing to another.
43. What was to be has come to pass. Be not over-eager for heaven,  
Nor yet be afraid of hell. What is ordained will be.

44. What was to be has come to pass. Seek not joy or sorrow.  
When we ask for joy, sorrow may come. But forget not the face  
of the Beloved.
47. What He has appointed shall be: why take the burden upon  
thyself?  
Leave it to the Master, and behold what He shall devise.
48. Deal with me, Lord, ■ Thou seest best: I leave it in Thy hands.  
I behold no other, I turn not elsewhere.
49. Do with me just ■ Thou wilt: with this I am well content.  
Dadu's heart is knit to the truth, though day be changed into  
night.
50. He that goes not about to speak evil of what the Doer has  
ordained,  
The same is the true servant and saint, who rests in Rama's good  
pleasure.
54. Rama is my daily food: Provider and provision alike is He;  
By that sacred food is all His household sustained.
55. My five senses have found contentment in the One: my heart is  
ravished within;  
All my hunger has passed away: I delight in no other.
56. The Master is my clothing, the Master is my daily food;  
The Master is the crown upon my head, the Master is my body  
and soul.
57. Lord, give me true contentment, love, devotion, faith;  
Give me uprightness, patience, truth. This is the prayer of Thy  
servant Dadu.

## THE FOUR WATCHES

*Song 41*

1. In the first watch of the night, O wanderer, thou camest into this  
world.  
Thou didst begin to drink the wine of illusion, and didst forget  
the Creator.  
Thou didst forget the Creator: thy heart went out in desire  
towards father and mother, kinsmen and wife.  
Thou didst entangle thyself in false illusion, and didst not con-  
sider, O foolish one.  
Fool, thou didst not consider. How many were thy sins: thy  
whole family was entangled.  
Says the servant Dadu: O wanderer, thou camest into this world.



2. In the second watch of the night, O wanderer, thou becamest enamoured of a young woman.  
 Intoxicated with the enchantment of illusion thou didst roam at large, unable to think of Rama.  
 Thou didst not think of Rama. Sighing for the object of thy delight, thou wert blind, and beheld not Death.  
 Thou didst not meditate on Hari, thou didst waste thy life, the lake of thy desires burst its dam in all directions.  
 It broke forth in all directions, and its waters were lost: a grievous account hast thou to render.  
 Says the servant Dadu: O wanderer, thou becamest enamoured of a young woman.
3. In the third watch of the night, O wanderer, thou becamest burdened with a heavy load.  
 Thou hadst given free rein to every impulse, and never paused to reflect.  
 Thou didst not reflect, nor call upon God's Name; how couldst thou reach the other shore?  
 Thou foundest not the other shore; then didst thou begin to repent, as thou wert sinking in the rushing stream.  
 Thy leaking boat was about to sink, and thou hadst not found the truth.  
 Says the servant Dadu: O wanderer, thou becamest burdened with a heavy load.
4. In the fourth watch of the night, O wanderer, thou art become an old man.  
 Thy youth is fled, thy face is wrinkled, and thy body is not cleansed.  
 Thou art not cleansed, thou hast squandered the night, and tears fill thine eyes.  
 Thy boat is sinking in the ocean of life, and there is none to comfort.  
 There is none to comfort, thou art in the meshes of the lord of the lower world. How canst thou win thy way across?  
 Says the servant Dadu: O wanderer, now art thou become an old man.

*Song 12*

*Refrain:* Leave me not, O Keshava: Thou art my Saviour.

1. Beholding my sins, cast me not away.  
 The Lord of the humble is merciful, though His worshipper is a sinful man.

2. A sinner am I from my birth, full of evil from head to foot.  
Take away my iniquities: Thou art the great Creator.
3. I am greatly defiled: now do Thou make me whole.  
Mighty is my Lord: be thou Thyself my Saviour.
4. Forget me not, O Keshava, even should I forget Thee.  
Lead Dadu to Thyself: O leave me not now.

### *Song 131*

*Refrain:* Thou alone art my Keeper. Apart from Thee there is no  
other who can deliver me from the sorrows of life.

1. The Five Enemies give me no rest for an instant: they harbour  
the King of Death.  
Lord of the world, Thy servant is afflicted: grant me Thy  
protection.
2. Without Thee this darkness consumes me: thorns beset me on  
every hand.  
Thou art merciful to the humble: why dost Thou, seeing my  
affliction, cause me thus to suffer?
3. O Hari, give me love for the Name that is beyond fear: grant me  
the entrancing vision of Thyself.  
Says Dadu: Make me wholly Thine, and blot out all my troubles.

### *Song 8*

*Refrain:* When will the day come when Dadu shall find the  
Beloved?

1. Then will He fold me in His embrace, then shall all my pain pass  
away.
2. When the Beloved speaks, then shall my heart be unable to con-  
tain itself for joy.
3. The Beloved will quench my thirst and give me to drink of His  
love.
4. When He grants the vision of Himself, then will Dadu sing His  
praise.

### *Song 128*

*Refrain:* Beloved, I would live wholly in the enjoyment of Thee.  
I would not leave Thee for a moment. My Lord, the  
Knower of hearts, comes not: the last of days has come.

1. Beloved One, my couch is solitary. How is it that I do not find  
Thee there?  
This is the fruit of my past deeds: now have they all come to view.
2. O beloved, why dost Thou not enter and take possession of my  
heart? I pray Thee tarry not.  
Dadu has sinned against Thee. Grant me deliverance, O Lord.

*Song 129*

*Refrain:* Thou, O Rama, art my Lord: I am wedded to Thee.  
Without Thee have I wandered far: I have received my  
deserts.

1. So long as I live without Hari, my body burns with pain.  
In this life I have learned nothing: I have but bruised my own  
head.
2. When will my release come? I know not how to worship Rama.  
Dadu has sinned against Thee. Have Thou compassion on me.

*Song 10*

\* *Refrain:* The bereft one takes no pleasure in her ornaments.  
Is there any who can cause her to meet with Rama?

1. Forgotten are her unguents and adornments: she knows only the  
bitter pain of separation.
2. The newly bereft is weary of all her trappings: is there any who  
can assuage her grief?
3. No thought has she of bodily comfort or ease: night and day she  
sighs as the *chatrig* for the dew.<sup>1</sup>
4. Says Dadu: She delights in no other: without Rama she has  
become as one dead.

*Song 125*

*Refrain:* For my Beloved's sake I meditate, that I may behold  
Him within my heart. My Soul is troubled: to whom  
shall I speak to assuage my sorrow?

1. I think upon the Beloved: soon may I behold Him and be content.  
By my companion's side I shall pass safely to the other shore.
2. Wearily the days pass without my Beloved: how shall I endure  
the years hour by hour?  
Says Dadu: Singing the praises of Hari, I worship the perfect  
Master.

<sup>1</sup> The *chatrig* is believed to drink no water but the pure dew of heaven.

*Song 127*

*Refrain:* Beloved One, what can I do? I cast myself at Thy feet.  
I surrender my life: I no longer fear to die.

1. Whether I die by melting or by burning, or place my head  
beneath the saw,
2. Whether I die by poison or by wounds, and wheresoever I may  
die,
3. Whether in bodily pain or by slow wasting, or through weeping  
from the pangs of separation,
4. Yet am I resolved to die calling upon Thee.  
The suffering Dadu is resigned to Thy will.

*Song 118*

*Refrain:* O Rama, my eternal Companion, 'tis for Thy sake

1. That I wear the garb of the ascetic, smear myself with ashes, and  
seek Thee as a mendicant, O Rama;
2. That I dwell solitary on the mountains, scale Meru's peak, and  
cry to Thee, O Rama;
3. That I consume this body, dissolve this heart, place my head  
beneath the saw, O Rama;
4. That I strike off my head and dedicate it to Thee. Dadu offers  
himself in sacrifice, O Rama.

*Song 18*

*Refrain:* O take not my life away until I have beheld Thee.

1. If I be separated from Thee now, how shall I meet Thee again?  
Not thus can one know Thee a second time.
2. Lord of the humble, look in mercy upon me: Thou art the source  
of all peace and joy.
3. Dadu weeps day and night to behold Thee, and to be released  
from the chain of re-births.

*Song 15*

*Refrain:* Lord, how shall I Thy servant live if Thou, the Mighty  
God, shouldst forsake me?

1. If Thou shouldst forget Thy creature, what other will cherish  
him?



2. If Thou shouldst withdraw Thyself for a moment, to whom shall Thy servant present his plea?
3. Though Thy servant has wrought much evil, do Thou, great Master, take his guilt away.
4. Thou, the mighty Lord, art my Master: Dadu is Thy lowly slave.

*Song 20*

*Refrain:* O Rama, I will not, I will not let Thee go. Diligently have I sought Thee: I will not let Thee go. I bind my heart to Thee: I will not let Thee go.

1. I yearn for Thee. How canst Thou leave me and depart?
2. No hero (O Dadu) art thou, or firm of purpose, that thou shouldst so long endure.
3. I cherish Thee in my heart. Thou art my Master. With hard searching have I found the Knower of hearts.
4. Now will I not let Thee go. Thou art my Master. Thy servant Dadu is before Thee.

*Song 22*

*Refrain:* After what manner shall I worship Thee, O Lord? I know not what is well pleasing to Thee.

1. Is it good to sing and dance, or to court the world's favour?
2. Is it good to bathe at sacred places, and to have the head shaven?
3. Is it good to leave home and kindred, and adopt the life of a mendicant?
4. Is it good to wear matted locks, and smear oneself with ashes?
5. Is it good to roam the forests, and observe a vow of silence?
6. Is it good to practise austerities, or endure the ordeal of the saw?
7. Is it good to profess the knowledge of Brahma, and to spend one's days in meditation?
8. What is pleasing to Thee Thou alone knowest. Dadu knows not. Do Thou instruct him.

*Song 53*

*Refrain:* The power of the Almighty passes comprehension. Whence came He? Where does He abide?

1. How did He create the air and the water? The mystery of the earth and the heavens is beyond knowledge.

2. How did He plant the soul within the body? How did the five elements unite to form one dwelling?
3. How did the one appear ■ manifold? How is all resolved again into one?
4. How does the Merciful One uphold the universe? Dadu is overwhelmed by His power.

*Song 382*

*Refrain:* Who shall there speak a word for one so mean as I, where holy men of old have not yet found the King's palace?

1. Shiva, Indra and saint Nārada chant His praise, eagerly awaiting His invitation to draw near.
2. The thirty-three crores of gods stand in His presence with folded hands.
3. Saints and sages remain in an attitude of rapt devotion, but even they have not reached the great palace.
4. Lowliest of all, I know not how to worship Him. How shall I meet with the All-Wise?

*Song 336*

*Refrain:* Of what account is this mean, and wretched one? Whom shall the poor cotton-carder<sup>1</sup> worship?

1. I am but one, the universe is manifold, the ocean of existence is flooded beyond bounds.
2. Were it one, then might I expound it. Entangled in the manifold, how should I unravel it?
3. Feeble am I: all these are mighty folk. How shall I worship what is thus diffused?
4. Says Dadu: Lo, seeking in all directions, I call upon the Beloved, even though I cannot understand.

*Song 132*

*Refrain:* O Madhava, this mind ever holds us back. It is intoxicated with material things: it rises up raging for them.

1. So enfeebled is it with worldly pleasures that it feels no pain in indulgence;  
Quaffing the deadly draught, and rejoicing in illusion, it mistakes poison for nectar.

<sup>1</sup> Reading *pinārā* for *pivārā*, an impossible word in the context.

- . Led by the five senses it reaches forth in all directions, and never turns back;  
Wheresoever Death stalks it takes its way, as men pursue a mirage in the desert.
- 3. The saints speak, but men heed not the Guru's counsel: they have no love, no worship, for Thee.  
Thou art Dadu's Friend and Helper. I have no strength in myself.

*Song 16*

*Refrain:* How shall I find my Lord Rama? These passions are beyond my control.

- 1. This mind of mine breaks forth in all directions: it is unable to see Rama close at hand.
- 2. The tongue delights in all kinds of flavours, the body craves for sensuous pleasures;
- 3. The ears have no relish for truth, the eyes are enchanted by beauty of form;
- 4. Lust and anger abate not: through greed the heart glories in material possessions.
- 5. Says Dadu: How can one find the Lord, while the mind is possessed by the objects of sense?

*Song 27*

*Refrain:* Of what value, pray, is that pleasure by which this body wastes away from moment to moment?

- 1. Riding in state on an elephant, the royal umbrella over thy head, thou but multipliest thy sorrows.
- 2. Holding dalliance with some fair one on an ornate couch, thou drinkest poison, and takest the way of death.
- 3. Tickling thy palate with all manner of delicacies, thou fallest through appetite into the snare of illusion.
- 4. Says Dadu: Forsake these things and cast thy soul in faith upon Rama: so shalt thou find in Him the sum of all delights.

*Song 384*

*Refrain:* Crows chatter over the carcass: they hover around and devour the flesh.

- 1. This body on whose adornment thou didst bestow so much care they have carried off and buried in the ground.

2. The body in which he took such pride a man must leave behind and set out on his wanderings.
3. The body he so fondly pampered must, all pride forgotten, mingle with the dust.
4. Of what account then is the body? In a moment it is laid in the earth.

*Song 30*

*Refrain:* What does it mean to live, brother, or what to die, if thou dost not dwell wholly in Rama?

1. What are wealth and ease, O proud Raja, or what avails it to go and live as a hermit in the forest?
2. What matters it whether thou hast learning, virtue, knowledge of the scriptures, or whether thou art an ignorant fool, if thou knowest not Rama?
3. Of what concern is it whether thou wakest night and day, or whether thou sleepest, if thou findest not Rama?
4. What profits it a man to be bond or free, if he has not the knowledge of Rama?

*Song 425*

*Refrain:* Stretch forth Thy hand, O Rama. Do Thou accomplish all. I am entangled in this world.

1. Blind, I have fallen into a deep pit: do Thou deliver me. I have no other but Thee, O merciful Lord of the humble.
  2. No way appears: on every hand is the snare of illusion. Death has drawn tight his noose: I have no deliverer.
  3. Without Rama there is no escape: be Thou my strong Helper. With ■ thousand efforts I have achieved nothing, but am only the more deeply enmeshed.
  4. When Thou seest the humble in distress, Thou, O Rama, art the destroyer of fear and pain.
- Says Dadu: O stretch forth Thy hand. Do Thou accomplish all.

*Song 343*

*Refrain:* Cherish, O heart, that Rama who endowed thee with soul and body; who created the heavens, and adorned them with constellations;

1. Who set the sun and ■■■■ ■■ lamps, and causes them to move without limbs,  
One hot, one cool, ■■ they perform their endless revolutions;



2. Who created the earth with all its varied hues, who made the seven oceans;  
Who provides for all creatures on land and in the sea, and is ever present to their need;
3. Who created the air, and water, and makes the copious showers to fall;  
Who waters the innumerable trees and herbs of every kind.
4. This vast expanse He created out of the five elements, and looked upon His handiwork.  
O my heart, worship the changeless Rama. Through Him Dadu has been awakened from sleep.

### *Song 355*

*Refrain:* Let nothing come between Thee and me, O Madhava,  
though Thou shouldst take away my life, though Thou shouldst set me in heaven or hell, or cleave my body in twain.

1. Whether Thou send misfortune, pain, and misery, or whether wealth and bodily comfort;  
Whether Thou keep me, as prince or beggar, in the home or in the forest, or cast me upon the sea shore, O Madhava;
2. Whether Thou set me free or hold me in bondage, O Madhava, whether Thou give me the wealth of the three worlds;  
Whether Thou exact every penalty, O Madhava, or whether Thou grant deliverance from all, O Madhava;
3. Whether Thou appoint my place on earth or in heaven, O Madhava, whether in the moon or in the sun;  
Yet grant that I may ever be close to Thee, O Madhava.  
O Madhava, be not Thou far from me.

### *Song 342*

*Refrain:* Forsake not truth, O foolish one. All-Sufficient is the Provider. The mighty Benefactor, He takes thought for all His creatures.

1. He that protected the unborn babe in the womb, safe from the consuming fire,  
He supplies man's needs, and ceaselessly watches over him.

2. Where does the *kunja* cherish her young? Is there any watcher there?<sup>1</sup>  
He who shields them from the frost and the heat, the same is my Lord.
3. He provides for all creatures on land and in the sea;  
He gives the grain between the upper and nether millstones:  
why should man fret himself?
4. He who has taken on Himself this burden will surely carry it.  
Says Dadu: Forget Him not for an instant: from Him is thy life.

### Song 338

*Refrain:* Thou wilt not have this body again, O foolish one. Why shouldst thou idly squander it? When the opportunity is past thou shalt gain nothing. Where shalt thou find it again?

1. Great is thy good fortune to have attained this present life in the body. Why indulge vain imaginings?  
Thou hast plunged it in worldly concerns: thou hast mingled the precious gold with clay.
2. Think not that thou wilt find it again: cast not away this present opportunity.  
Thine is the wealth of the three worlds: by trading thou mayest quickly possess it.
3. While breath dwells in thy body, why not eagerly seek it?  
Says Dadu: The man who receives a body, and takes not God's Name, will have cause to repent.

### Song 96

*Refrain:* O my foolish heart, take but a little thought, else wilt thou have reason to repent. No such opportunity will come again.

1. Why, O heart, dost thou wander in error? Consider well this life in the body.  
Set in order that path in which it is thine to tread.
2. The path before thee is perilous, O heart, even as the edge of a sword.  
Says Dadu: Make thy peace with the Lord, and depart from evil-doing.

<sup>1</sup> The *Kunja* is believed to cherish her young afar off by remembrance of them.

*Song 136*

*Refrain:* None thinks of robbing one who is awake. Waking, he is on his guard, so that no thief draws near.

1. Asleep, the master of the house knows not what is afoot: the thief creeps round the house, and spoils his goods.  
None is on watch near the law-breaker: thus is he able to effect his purpose.
2. The deed done, what avails it, pray, to watch? The goods are already gone.  
The spent night does not return: what then wilt thou do, brother?
3. When one keeps watch betimes, no harm befalls his goods.  
Says Dadu: Knowing the case to be so, see that thou doest what is needful.

*Song 367*

*Refrain:* O Mohan, take away my sore trouble: it returns again and again to torment me.

1. Fierce passions rage within me which hinder my study and meditation;  
O Mohan, my ways and thoughts are so undisciplined that I cannot fix my mind on Thy worship.
2. Through the senses my body is full of darkness, so that calm, self-control and truth are far from me.  
Discernment has forsaken me, and thus I have forgotten Thee, my Lord.
3. Anger never parts company with me: so my love and devotion are spoiled;  
None understands the workings of his heart: therefore do we turn away from Thy feet, O Murārī.
4. O Searcher of hearts, help me. Thy lowly one is afflicted; his life is spent in vain.  
Have mercy, have mercy! Thou, Lord, art gracious. Says Dadu, Watch over me, O Hari.

*Song 13*

*Refrain:* Remember Rama: thou art in evil case.

1. The boat is in the midst of the sea, the rower is on the point of drowning;  
Now is there none who can ■■■ him ■■■ Rama alone.



2. Adrift on life's ocean the boat cannot make the other shore without Rama.  
Only Thou canst bear it across: there is no other.
3. When Thou, O Creator, takest the oars, then will the boat pass safely over;  
Without Thee, the Stay of the soul, it sinks in the world-ocean.
4. How can the passenger hope to cross this fearsome stream?  
Says Dadu: Without Rama as Oarsman, who can reach the further shore?

### Song 233

*Refrain:* There is no Father but Thou. Manifold are Thy names,  
but I acknowledge no other.

1. The One Invisible God art Thou: Thou art Rama, Thou art the Merciful (*Rahīm*),  
Thou art Ruler (*Mālik*), Thou art Mohan, the Enchanter;  
Keshava, the Bounteous, is Thy name: Thou art the Compassionate (*Karīm*).
2. The Lord, the Creator art Thou; Thou art the Pure, the Holy;  
Thou art the changeless Disposer (*Kartā*); Thou art Hari, Thou art the ever-present Self.
3. Thou art the One omnipresent Provider (*Rāziq*), the Many-Coloured, the Lofty One;  
The Almighty Disposer art Thou; Thou art the Master (*Sāhib*), the King (*Sultān*).
4. The Imperishable, Allah, the Bounteous (*Ḡanī*) Lord art Thou,  
The Wonderful, the Incomparable Self. Says Dadu: Manifold are Thy names.

### Song 346

*Refrain:* I have searched the three worlds, and see none besides  
Hari who remains changeless. All that we behold fades  
and passes away: ■ the Guru has taught.

1. Earth and sky, air and water, moon and sun, will pass away;  
Night and day too will cease; One alone will remain amid passing things.
2. Saints, apostles, teachers, Shiva, Indra and all the gods—  
When the morrow comes, not one of them will remain: only the Invisible, the Incomprehensible, will endure.



3. The ten thousand hills and mountain peaks will vanish; there will be no more sea or dry land;  
The river channels will be seen no more. Only the Deathless One will remain.
4. The Imperishable, who called all these things into being, He alone shall endure.  
I behold all the world passing away. Seek to know Him who alone abides.

*Song 140*

*Refrain:* The Upholder of the earth has beguiled and cheated us.  
He grants us not to handle His form; He pays no heed to what we say, but does whatsoever He pleases.

1. He has beguiled us and taken our all; such weaklings He treats ■ of no account.  
He Himself remains apart. He calls ■ to Him, and takes us to His house.
2. Rama has cajoled us and made ■ happy, but to none has He disclosed His secret.  
Concealed from view, He remains undetected. This wonder He has wrought.
3. Even as a mother wheedles her weeping child, so does He beguile us. Nevertheless, such as He is, He is ours. Dadu will not disclose His doings.

*Song 154*

*Refrain:* Thou art as one who changes his disguises. Concealing Thyself, deceive me not.

1. Why, beguiling me, hast 'Thou become aloof? Show Thyself.  
How can I live alone, like a woman bereft of her lord?
2. O Saviour of the spirit, leave me not alone.  
Ever abide with Dadu, and bear him safely over.

*Song 429*

*Refrain:* I will sing Thy praise, O Eternal One: Thou art the great Giver;  
All hast Thou created, O Master: the mighty Doer art Thou.

1. The fourteen mansions dost Thou destroy and fashion, without haste or delay;  
Thou the Lord dost make and unmake: Blessed, blessed be Thou,  
O Creator.

2. Earth and heaven hast Thou made, and the boundless waters and air;  
Sun and moon hast Thou set for lamps, and spread out day and night;
3. Brahma and Shiva didst Thou create, and didst send Vishnu to earth;  
Gods, heroes, saints—all didst Thou create. Let the soul consider it well.
4. Thou Thyself remainest uncontaminated, the Eternal Beholder;  
Dadu declares the excellencies of the Unconditioned. I offer myself in sacrifice to Him.

Song 404

*Refrain:* Rama is all-pervading, yet men behold Him not. Whoso beholds Him is made pure.

1. Without, within, near and far, the Master is present everywhere.
2. Wheresoever I look, there is no other: Rama dwells in every soul.
3. Whithersoever I go, He is with me: the Lord of the three worlds filleth all.
4. Says Dadu: When men behold Hari they find peace. O grant that day and night my gaze may be fixed on Thee.

Song 156

*Refrain:* Awake, the night is gone. Thy life is passing like water through the fingers.

1. The gong strikes the passing hours: the day that is gone never returns.
2. Sun and moon utter their warning: thy life is running out day by day.
3. As the water of the lake, and the shadow of the tree departs, ■  
Death preys upon thy body night and day.
4. The swan (soul) takes flight, life passes, and thou hast not known the indwelling Rama.

Song 348

*Refrain:* The chief ornament among saints is he who sings the excellencies of Govinda;  
Who worships Rama, forsakes worldly pleasures, and takes no thought of self.

1. He who speaks not idly with his mouth, and slanders not another;  
Who departs from evil and practises virtue, whose heart is with  
Hari;
2. He who bears enmity to none, esteeming other spirits as his own;  
Who, forgetful of self, seeks equally the good of all;
3. He who, beholding the divine presence in all, makes no  
distinction between himself and others;  
Who, sincere in heart, speaks truth, and devoutly meditates;
4. He who, worshipping Him who is void of fear, is himself set free  
and nowise entangled.  
Says Dadu: In all the world perchance there is such an one.

*Song 117*

*Refrain:* My Lord, Teach me to reverence Thy name, that I may  
cherish the Jewel, Rama, within my heart. Deliver  
me, my Beloved, from bondage to outward things.

1. In speech and in thought, O Beloved, may my mind be directed  
towards Thee.  
Hearing and sight are of the senses: let the remembrance of Thee  
cleansc me from defilement within.
2. As thou, O Beloved, dost grant me life, grant also that Rama may  
pervade my being: may this be the fruit of my living.  
In whatsoever I am in bondage through neglect of Thy name, do  
Thou set Thy servant Dadu free.

*Song 8*

*Refrain:* Brother, if the heart is pure, the body will be pure:  
In no other way can thy sickness be relieved.

1. If the heart is the *koel*, the body is the snare: struggle as it may, it  
cannot escape.
2. If the heart is poisoned, the body is the snake: do what it will, the  
poison remains.
3. While the heart is defiled, the body remains unclean: no lamenta-  
tion can cure its sickness.
4. When the heart is pure, the body too is pure. Says Dadu: Let ■  
man meditate on this truth.

*Song 181*

*Refrain:* Teach me, O Hari, to reverence Thy pure Name, that my heart may be glad in Thy worship.

1. Make my heart to overflow with love, devotion, yearning, O Hari. Make me gentle in speech and humble of bearing, rejoicing in Rama's fellowship.
2. Fill me with spiritual longing, detachment from the world, a loving spirit: may I speak truth out of a true heart. May I steadfastly cherish the desire to remain ever devoted to Thy feet.
3. Grant me quiet contentment and self-control, and keep my heart firmly directed toward Thee. O Ever-Present, awaken me to the sense of Thy constant presence.
4. O Mohan, grant me knowledge, and the power of meditation, that my mind may continually turn to Thee. Lord of the humble, grant that the Light of lights may illumine Dadu's heart.

*Song 356*

*Refrain:* Now have I found the love of Rama: I have given my whole heart to the unspeakable mystery.

1. When I surrendered myself, body, mind and spirit, to Him, then did Hari make me his own.
2. His pure Word has possessed my soul and senses. When I yielded up my all, then did I find the Lord.
3. While yet alive I have attained the purpose of my life, having learned to know Him who has dealt so graciously with me.
4. He has directed me to His abode: while yet alive He has borne me thither.

*Song 266*

*Refrain:* Show pity, O my Master, that Thy servant may live aright.

1. When we turn away from Thee, Thou unitest us with Thyself again. We cast Thee off, but Thou dost not cast us off.
2. We forget Thee, but Thou dost not forget. We fall into evil, but Thou dost not give us up.
3. We lose our way, but Thou drawest us still: we turn aside, but Thou dost embrace us again.
4. It is not in us to do what is pleasing to Thee. Grant us, O Lord, the vision of Thyself.



*Song 178*

*Refrain:* 'Tis devotion I crave, O Father, 'tis devotion I crave: I  
am enamoured of Thy Name.

Of what value are the heavens of Brahma or of Shiva to  
me? I ask not worlds, but immortality.

1. Grant help to this Thy creature, that I may be steeped in living  
devotion.  
I desire not wealth nor honour, ■ dwelling in Vishnu's heaven, or  
salvation in the abode of Indra.
2. Only devotion is dear: the changeless Hari Himself, and the  
worship of His immaculate Name, alone delight me.  
I esteem not spiritual attainments, nor wealth, nor worldly  
power; divine honours profit me nothing.
3. Grant me devotion, O Father, that I may be continually  
united to the Spirit within.  
Says Dadu: If Thou shouldst grant me a million gifts, I would  
not have them, apart from Thee.

*Song 238*

*Refrain:* He is Light, Light, Light, from first to last:  
Eternal, Changeless, filling all creation.

1. In the heavens, Light, on the earth, Light: the Holy Provider;  
In the water, Light, in the air, Light: the Source of all  
excellencies.
2. Without and within, present and beholding all, art Thou, the  
wise Ruler.  
I have beheld the strange and marvellous Light: Dadu is over-  
whelmed.

## WORSHIP

(*Arati*)<sup>1</sup>

*Song 441*

*Refrain:* Thus do thou worship Rama: within thine own spirit  
perform thy devotions.

1. Let body and mind be the sandal-wood, love the rosary, the  
inward Voice the temple-gong of the Lord of the humble.
2. Let wisdom be the lamp, the vital airs the wick, the object of thy  
worship Niranjana, the five organs of ■■■■ the sacred vessels.

<sup>1</sup> The two hymns that follow are regularly used in daily worship.

3. Offer the service of joy and gladness and loving trust: let the intent of the heart be the temple of the indwelling God.
4. I dedicate myself in continual devotion. Dadu knows not how to worship Thee aright.

*Song 442*

*Refrain:* Worship to Thee, O Life of the World: I perform my devotions at Thy lotus feet.

1. Within the heart ply the fan of love to Hari: let the light of wisdom be the lamp.
2. Let the voiceless Word be the gong: let the heavens resound with the joy of worship.
3. Offer to Hari the incense of meditation: lay upon his shrine the flowers of devotion.
4. The sum of all service is to bow in spirit before the divine Niranjana and no other.
5. Perform thy worship with love and trust. Thus, says Dadu, thou shalt live from age to age.

## Chapter Eight

### THE TEACHING OF DADU

IN the passages already quoted we have to some extent anticipated the subject of this chapter. It remains to bring together, in somewhat more orderly fashion, the main features of Dadu's teaching.

Dadu was not a systematic theologian. His interest lay, not in philosophic subtleties, but in the practical problems of man's salvation. His treatment of the great themes is popular and discursive. At the same time, he was a man who had pondered long and deeply on the mystery of human existence. He was of those, who, in his own words, "churn and extract the essence". He had reflected "on the beginning and the end".

Between one who reflects and ten million who follow outward rules  
there is no comparison.

The world is full of observers of rules, but one who pauses to reflect  
is rare indeed.

Reflect on that wisdom whereby love and devotion may increase  
day by day,

Search the spirit: churn and extract the essence.

When truth is found within the mind itself, then dost thou know  
something of its secret.

Direct the mind. Why waste a lifetime studying the Vedas?

Let a man first reflect, then utter what he has to say.

Behold the nature of the beginning and the end, and grasp what is  
essential.

Let the thought that arises last be the first to be uttered;

Then will the mind be at peace, and never have cause to grieve.

He that, reflecting on the mystery of Maya and Brahma, has  
pondered the beginning and the end,

And stored up the truth wherever found, will not be at a loss to give  
it forth at need.

(18: 14, 37, 39, 46, 49, 50.)

Dadu's own reflection on the ultimate meaning of things had resulted in certain very clear convictions. If he did not become

the founder of a new system—an ambition he never cherished—he at least arrived at a working faith on which he felt that, amid all vicissitudes, he could securely lean. His aim was essentially constructive. For all its simple diction, the *Bani* is by no means always easy reading. It challenges thought. It provokes inquiry. It compasses heights and depths of religious experience unknown to the facile believer who is accustomed to take the fundamentals of his faith for granted. Whatever may be said of the internal coherence or otherwise of the *Bani*—and religious faith is not primarily a matter of logical consistency—it should never be forgotten that the message it contains is the fruit of a lifelong quest of truth, inspired by a profound moral earnestness and an insatiable hunger for the vision of God. For the unthoughtful reader such a message, despite its (to many) unfamiliar modes of thought and imperfect means of expression, cannot fail of either instruction or inspiration. If we would enter at all into its meaning, we must approach it in no spirit of mere idle curiosity, but with the reverence due to a real spiritual insight, born of an intimate experience of communion with God.

Of Dadu's debt to Hindu and Muslim thought we have already spoken in an earlier chapter. The whole trend of later exposition has been to give special prominence to those aspects of Dadu's teaching which approximate most closely to the orthodox Hindu standpoint. There is no reason to deny that certain fundamental postulates of Hindu philosophy not only provide the setting of many of Dadu's religious ideas, but are so interwoven with the very fabric of his thought as profoundly to influence his whole outlook on God and the world. At the same time, it has to be recognised that to lay undue stress on the intellectual framework to which Dadu was under the necessity of accommodating his ideas may well be to miss the truly vital element in his message. Dadu's teaching, as we have seen, brought him into active conflict with the champions both of Hinduism and of Islam. The Hindu charged him with being a destroyer of the faith, the Muslim denounced him as a blasphemer. But in truth, as he himself (following Kabir) repeatedly declared, he was neither a Muslim nor a Hindu. There are in fact aspects of Dadu's teaching—and these by no means trivial or superficial aspects—which it is quite impossible to square



either with Hindu philosophy or with Islamic theology. It is precisely these features of Dadu's message that we feel it most necessary to emphasise.

#### THE PROBLEM STATED

It is broadly true to say that Dadu's whole conception of the problem of man's redemption is dominated by the idea of *karma*. The souls of men are involved in an endless cycle of re-births determined by *karma*, that is, by the fruits of their past actions. From this causal chain no efforts of man's own can ever win deliverance. Like a traveller sunk in a quagmire, his struggles only cause him to sink the deeper. Like a bird imprisoned in a cage he only breaks his wings against the prison bars. This enslavement of the soul is set forth under many images. Life is a deep and perilous ocean on which man is adrift in a leaking boat, at the mercy of winds and currents; no shore is visible on either hand, the "whence" and "whither" of his journey are alike unknown. Again, life is a steep and difficult pass over the mountains, where robbers lurk at every turn, and Death stalks the footsteps of the unwary traveller. Or, life is a devouring flame which nothing can escape. It is a raging flood sweeping all before it and leaving death and destruction in its train. For Dadu there is no question of making the best of both worlds. This world is a veritable city of destruction. Man's one hope of salvation is to flee. But how, or whither?

To Dadu life presents the twofold aspect, on the one hand of men and women held in the power of the great illusion, fatally credulous of the worth and permanence of the things they see and handle, eagerly pursuing the mirage of wealth and power and pleasure, bartering the precious diamond for a worthless shell, drinking the poisoned cup that Death holds out to them, devouring the tasty morsel with which his trap is baited, circling like moths about the destroying flame; and, on the other hand, of souls roused to a sense of their danger, fleeing panic-stricken in all directions, risking their all on the crazy ship that for the moment stands between them and destruction, or clinging desperately to rafts and spars in a vain effort to reach the distant and still invisible shore.

It is hardly necessary to illustrate at length this phase of Dadu's teaching. More significant for the student of the *Bani* than the desperate situation he depicts is the deep anguish of spirit with which Dadu contemplates the spectacle. Ever and anon there breaks from his lips a cry of pain reminiscent of St. Paul's "great heaviness and continual sorrow"<sup>1</sup> on account of his unbelieving brethren, and an eager supplication that God may look in mercy on His perishing creatures and reach forth His mighty hand to save them. It was this that made Dadu, not only an earnest seeker after truth, but an ardent teacher and preacher of the way of salvation.

The worlds of the body are endless: within each man a crowd of  
passions throng;

Wheresoever he goes they accompany him, even to the other bank  
of the stream.

The body is illusion: they that war in it are exceeding powerful;  
How shall one cross the difficult stream, when the worlds of the body  
are endless?

Men abandon the grosser illusion, only to lay hold on the more  
subtle.

None obtain release. A great evil is illusion. (18: 16-18.)

Asleep, thou beholdest in ■ dream that which is not.

It proves false. When thou awakest, it is nothing.

All this illusion is a mirage that deceives by its false glitter;

Beholding its glamour, men believe it to be real.

The mirage glitters deceitfully: men take it for water.

The world dies of thirst ■ man and beast come to drink of it.

(12: 6-8.)

The note of intercession comes out clearly in the following:

The body, the boat, is in the midst of the sea, far from either shore.  
Appalled at the sight, Dadu cries aloud.

In this evil age, all is shrouded in thick darkness on every hand;  
Apart from Thee, O mighty Creator, how can one pass over?

The flame has caught, the world is ablaze, the fire burns in the body  
of each one everywhere.

Nought that we can do avails. Thou alone canst send the rain to  
quench it.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 9: 2.

The scorching sun beats on heaven and earth and all existing things;  
 Seeing the world ablaze, the saint sends forth his cry.

Do Thou, Hari, remove the venom from the whole creation and  
 from all spirits;

Draw aside the curtain: leave them not uncared for,

May all be made pure in body, mind and spirit.

None comprehends this enslavement to the things of sense.

(34: 44, 45, 59, 61-63.)

#### DADU'S TEACHING REGARDING GOD

Thus, to the question: How can men find salvation? Dadu's answer is clear and emphatic. Salvation is of God. This brings us at once to the very heart of our subject. What did Dadu believe and teach regarding God? When we have found a reasonably satisfactory answer to that question, all else will fall into its proper place. It is by no means easy to gather up into a brief statement the varied strands of Dadu's thought on this inexhaustible theme, but some broad characteristics may be indicated.

Behind all Dadu's thinking lies the overpowering sense—so typical of the higher Hindu thought—of the impenetrable mystery of God's being. Gods and men, saints and sages, have worn themselves out in the effort to spell out that mystery, but all in vain. No finite mind can conceive, no human tongue can utter, what He truly is.

To what shall we compare Him? There is no second.

Rama is like Rama. In remembrance of Him is peace.

He alone knows His own secret: no other knows it.

Delight in Him through continual remembrance: so shalt thou find happiness.

(2: 84, 85.)

As Thou art, so is Thy Name. Utter Thyself, O Lord, as Thou art.

Only Thyself knowest Thyself: to that knowledge have I no access.

All Thy names are excellent, but they are not as Thou art.

Of all who have come and gone, none has discovered Thy secret.

What do I know, what can I tell, of that Mighty One?

What know I of His manner of life? He utterly transcends my comprehension.

(6: 6, 17, 19.)

Light is comparable only to light, glory to glory,  
 Splendour to splendour. Dadu rejoices in the presence of the Lord.  
 (4: 108)

At times the sense of the incomprehensibility of God is carried almost to the point of sheer negation.

What is the name of NOTHING? If thou givest it a name, it is false.  
 Gods, heroes and sages—all are fast held in the cycle of re-birth.  
 Giving a name to Nothing, the whole world has gone astray;  
 It discerns not the false and the true: it considers not at all.  
 (13: 145-6.)

The four Vedas praise Him, but know not the secret of *neti, neti*.<sup>1</sup>  
 (Hymn 392, 2.)

The tendency of popular religion has ever been, to belittle the greatness of God in the interests of His nearness. Like so many Indian thinkers, Dadu, on the other hand, would sometimes seem to come perilously near to closing every avenue of approach to God on the part of the worshipper.

None has seen Him, or heard Him, nor is there any to declare Him;  
 Never has any returned from the world beyond to tell of Him. He  
 has no bound or limit.

Neither is He dead, nor lives, nor does He come and go.  
 He sleeps not, He wakes not, nor does He hunger and eat.

With him is neither silence nor speech, with Him is no "I"  
 or "thou",

No self, no other: there is neither One nor Two.

If I say "One" there are two; if I say "Two" there is but One.  
 Thus is Dadu bewildered. As He is, so do thou behold Him.

(6: 21-24.)

It must already have become clear, however, that for Dadu God is no mere philosophical abstraction. While the secret of His being remains an insoluble mystery, His power and glory are everywhere manifest. Unknown, yet self-revealing; remote yet omnipresent; ever drawing near to men in pity and grace, yet

<sup>1</sup> *Not so, not so.* The reply of the Vedantist to every attempt of the human mind to describe the Indescribable.



ever eluding the effort of the human mind to grasp and hold Him; He is the One alone Real in a world of unreality, the eternal source from which all beings come forth, the treasure-house of all excellencies, the Lord of creation to whom all creatures bow. Even in those passages where His utter detachment from the world is set forth in the most emphatic terms, He is still the Doer, the Merciful, the Creator, the divine Companion.

I dwell within Myself, I am my own household;  
 I live within Myself, says the Self, the Doer.  
 I am my own heaven, my own dwelling;  
 I am my own abode, says the Self, the Merciful.  
 I am my own confidence, my own support;  
 I am my own resting-place, says the Self, the Creator.  
 I am my own kindred, I am my own body,  
 I am my own soul, says the Self, the Companion.

(4: 10-13. Cf. *Hymn 57.*)

As Niranjana (free from passion, or free from stain), and as Nirguṇa (the Absolute, the Unconditioned), God alone knows no change or decay. He is the Immutable, the Indestructible.

The Creator alone will endure, though the whole world pass away.  
 The sky and the earth will pass away; the air also and the water.  
 The sun and moon will pass away; the whole universe will pass away.  
 Day and night will pass away; yea, even Yama's abode<sup>1</sup> will pass away.

Cruel death will also pass away; this entire universe will pass away.  
 Heaven and hell will pass away; and all the dwellers therein.  
 All joy and all sorrow will pass away; our poor actions also.  
 The unstable passeth, while the stable endureth. Yea, the whole creation will pass away.

Dadu saith: Verily, the Indestructible alone will abide and the rest will break like a pot of clay.

(*Hymn 225. Psalms of Dadu, No. 30.*)

Whatever degree of reality Dadu may have ascribed to the great gods of Hindu worship, it is clear that for him they had

<sup>1</sup> The nether regions.

none of the attributes of deity. In common with all created beings, they are held in the bonds of illusion and thus subject to the laws of birth and death.

Gods and men, even Brahmā, Vishnu, and Mahesh,<sup>1</sup> have become entangled;

Calling the poison nectar, all have drunk of it.

Illusion sits in the place of Rāma: she says: "I am the great Enchanter."

Even Brahmā, Vishnu, and Mahesh return to the womb.

(12: 124, 141.)

These deities are frequently represented as engaged in the worship of God, and as joining with all creation in hymns of praise to Him.

Sweet is the essence of Rama: the wise saints drink of it.

The man who with love continually drinks of it becomes immortal.

This is the essence to which the sages are devoted, Brahmā, Vishnu and Mahesh,

Heroes, saints and devotees; Shesha also drinks of it.

(Hymn 58, Refrain and Verse 1.)

Shankar<sup>2</sup> is wholly absorbed in His service, and Brahmā, the Potter, knoweth not His secret;

All the gods adore Him and the *munis* meditate on Him.

(*Psalm of Dadu*, No. 113. Hymn 392, 2, 3.)

Over against these mortal creatures stands the Immortal, the One without a second.

That which is born and dies is the soul;<sup>3</sup> it is not the indwelling Rama.

He who is immune from birth or death, the same is my Master.

Ever the same, He rises not nor sits, sleeps nor wakes;

The World-Guru neither dies nor comes to life: in Him all things are created and destroyed.

Neither is He born, nor dies: He comes not to dwell in the womb;

He lies not face downwards for ten moons in the pit of hell.

The Uncreated is Brahma: He knows no increase or decrease;

Eternally changeless, He comes not to dance in the world.

(20: 15-18.)

<sup>1</sup> Shiva.

<sup>2</sup> Shiva.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. living creature.

This eternal God is the Almighty Creator. Dadu's view of creation will be dealt with in a later section. Here we are concerned with it merely as a manifestation of divine power. A whole chapter of the *Bani* is devoted to the extolling of the creative power of God, but the theme is one to which Dadu constantly returns. Nowhere is the influence of Islamic thought on his ideas more apparent.

God is also described as the Doer, the Disposer, a word hardly distinguishable in Dadu's usage from Creator, except that it embraces all aspects of God's self-manifestation, as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer. Often it is almost the equivalent of the word "Providence."

I will sing Thy praises, O Changeless One: Thou art the great Giver;  
All things hast Thou created, O Lord: the mighty Doer art Thou.  
The fourteen worlds dost Thou fashion and destroy: they are formed  
in ■ moment;  
Thou, the Master, dost make and unmake them. Blessed, blessed art  
Thou, O Creator.  
Earth and sky didst Thou call into being, the waters and the bound-  
less air;  
Sun and moon didst Thou fashion ■ lamps, and spread out night  
and day.  
Brahmā<sup>1</sup> and Shankar didst Thou form, and made Vishnu  
incarnate (*avatāra*);  
Gods, men, and saints didst Thou create. Let the soul consider it  
well.  
Thou Thyself remainest aloof (*niranjana*) the changeless Beholder.  
Dadu proclaims the excellencies of the Unconditioned. I offer myself  
in sacrifice to Him.

(Hymn 429.)

I worship that Mighty King upon whom all other beings wait.  
He created the three worlds for His abode, and hung the sun and  
moon ■ lamps therein.  
The wind sweeps His courtyard, and the forty-six crores of showers  
wash His house.  
The Universe is His store chamber whence He dealeth His bounty  
to all.  
He giveth freely to all, yet His treasure is ever full.  
Such is the Eternal and Holy God.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Creator-God of the Hindu triad.

■ Niranjana.

Before Him the saints play upon diverse instruments of music and sing His glory without ceasing.

The bounteous and benign Creator weareth about His neck eighteen loads of garlands woven of flowers.

Such is the King; He fills the fourteen worlds.

Dadu worships Him who created and supports the entire Universe.

(*Hymn 392, 1, 5, 7, 8, Psalms of Dadu, No. 113.*)

I worship the Sovereign Lord; I bow down at His feet, He stretches out his helping hand and leads me across;

He whispers His word in my heart.

How can I describe His ineffable attributes? He is present everywhere.

His attributes are great; His body is strong; His powerful Being is all bliss.

Wherever I turn I see Him alone.

He is present in the mountains and in the trees.

Dadu saith: thou knowest not the future; make the Lord thy helper by loving Him.

(*Hymn 89, Psalms of Dadu, No. 84.*)

In a moment the Doer transforms the insect into an elephant.  
From the elephant He forms an insect. None can undo His work.

In a moment the Doer makes the mustard seed a mountain;  
He makes the mountain a mustard seed. Who can annul His commands?

In a moment the Doer forms dry land in the midst of the waters;  
The dry land does He cover with moisture: so powerful is He.

In a moment the Doer fills the empty store house;  
The full treasury He makes empty: such is the Creator.

He changes earth into sky and sky into earth;  
He changes the dark night into day, and day into night.

Who, pray, can bring forth the dead from the burning-ground and cause him to walk?

Think not to comprehend the Incomprehensible: the world shows another than He.

He reveals hidden excellencies, and conceals those that are manifest.  
In a moment He fashions and destroys: His ways are beyond comprehension.

(21: 2-8.)



The Doer controls the destinies of men.

Says Dadu: Of that which we devise nothing comes to pass.

The real Doer is He: He brings forth something other.

He calls for one, and dismisses another;

A wondrous Master is He: how should one comprehend Him?

As He disposes us, so we remain: we have no power in ourselves.

All are in his hand. Whither shall we flee?

The cord is in the hand of Hari: it is fastened about my neck;

The performer's monkey turns whithersoever his master wills.

(21: 14-17.)

But, while the Creator and Disposer pervades all and is the ultimate source of all that is or can be, He is nowise imprisoned in the world of His creation; He is nowise involved in action and its fruits.

He remains apart and does all, yet is He not entangled.

From first to last it is He who creates and destroys: so mighty is He.

Without labour He does all: thus did He frame the universe.

He remains the Beholder, while all things come to pass.

Says Dadu: By His word all is sustained, at His word all passes away.

At His word all things arise, at His Word all come to an end.

(21: 30-31; 22: 2. Cf. *Hymn* 53.)

Thus the manifold universe is often set forth, as in the Vedānta, as the play or sport of the Supreme Being. In accordance with this idea God is represented (as in Kabir) as the Magician or Juggler who deludes men by his tricks.

My brother, the Juggler hath shown His performance; and yet hath kept Himself aloof.

He hath displayed all His jugglery, and charmed the spectators.

The Juggler showeth His tricks; but none can discover His hand.

The world is deceived by the Juggler's tricks, and none can know Him.

They see what is not, but see not that which truly is.

He hath so deceived mankind that they have forgotten their own bodies and minds.

The Magician's performances are incomprehensible.

When the Magician is discovered, His jugglery is seen as it truly is.  
Dadu saith: Verily he alone findeth the Juggler who is detached  
from His jugglery.

(Hymn 306. *Psalm of Dadu*, No. 54.)

And again

My mother, how wondrous is Thy sport. How can I express it? It is  
incomprehensible.

Gods, men and saints are astonished at it: none can know the  
mystery of Ram's ways.

His image is in the heart. Is there anyone who can show it?

Consider in thy heart and think only of Him. His glory is hidden, as  
the light in the lamp.

Meditate on the Eternal Being in the depth of thy heart; and there  
behold who is awake and who is asleep.<sup>1</sup>

Dadu saith: I know not this mystery; whosoever comprehendeth it is  
my Guru.

(Hymn 67. *Psalm of Dadu*, No. 78.)

Thus the Doer, the Lord of the universe, is seen to be the  
Lord also of *karma*. Here is no lifeless machine grinding out  
rewards and punishments with relentless justice.

Deeds (*karma*) control the soul; the Doer controls the deeds;

None is there, says Dadu, who controls the Doer.

(21: 44.)

We find the same thought expressed in the following:

All hail Lord of the Universe, Thou art Almighty. Thou createst  
and Thou dost destroy the entire Universe; there is none other  
save Thee.

O Lord, Time and Death implore Thy mercy; and Yama is the  
bondservant of Thy *Maya*.

All-devouring Death feareth Thee; my heart is in great fear.

All those that fetter us with the snares of this world tremble before  
the Creator, who destroys the enemies that are without us and  
within us;

Who comforts us, and removes all obstacles from our path.

The Lord watcheth over us, He is also within us.

Dadu saith: The servant of Ram is free from all dangers, and feareth  
none.

(Hymn 182. *Psalm of Dadu*, No. 15.)

<sup>1</sup> A reference "to the Hindu belief in the individual soul being asleep and the  
Universal soul being awake in the heart". (T.D.G.)

When we turn to those passages in the *Bani* in which God is pictured as the righteous Judge to whom men must give account, we are conscious of having travelled a long way indeed from the traditional doctrine of *karma*.

O heart, worship thou Rama.

When the Master shall call thee to account, what answer wilt thou give?

(Hymn 430, Refrain.)

Fear Him, fear Him; O fear the Lord.

When He takes account, thou must pay to the full. Sin not thou against Him.

(Hymn 432, Refrain.)

Once again, God is the indwelling Spirit in man, the light of all his seeing. This thought is amply illustrated in many passages already quoted. We shall have occasion to return to the subject when speaking of Dadu's teaching regarding the human soul. Here a few extracts will suffice.

As thou beholdest thy face in a mirror or thy reflection in the water  
So is the indwelling Rama present to all.

As the oil dwells in the oilseed, as the fragrance in the flower,  
As butter in the milk, so does the Lord dwell in the spirits of men.  
So does the Lord dwell in the spirits of men, as the spirit dwells in  
the air-channels,

As warmth in the sun, as coolness in the moon.

He that made the temple of the heart, the same is He that dwells in  
the temple of the heart;

Within the heart is the beloved Companion: there is no other.

(18: 3, 5, 6, 7.)

I behold Niranjana close at hand: He departs not for a moment.  
Without, within, He is the same: He is all-pervading.

He that permeates me through and through, the same is my life;  
The souls of men and the Beloved are not separate: all dwell  
together.

The All-knowing dwells freely within the heart.

Says Dadu: In all men I behold the same Master.

(Hymn 206: Refrain and 3, 4.)

In the illumined heart of the spirit the Beloved dwells;  
There His servant performs his worship, where is the Omnipresent.

In the illumined heart of the spirit is the Creator in His fulness;  
 There is the great light of Allah: His minister is before Him.  
 In the illumined heart of the spirit behold the Doer;  
 There does the servant perform his service, where is the endless play  
 of all the suns.  
 In the illumined heart of the spirit has Niranjana His dwelling;  
 There does the worshipper, at one step, behold the wealth of glory.  
 (4: 221-24.)

The last two quotations relate, not only to the fact of God's universal presence in the souls of men, but also to the spiritual apprehension of His presence by the worshipper. This leads us to speak of Dadu's conception of God as self-revealing. In this connection stress should be laid on the supreme importance Dadu, in common with other *bhakti* writers, attaches to the remembrance of God's Name. For the Indian saint, as for the ancient Hebrew, the Name of God is intimately bound up with the idea of revelation. It is not something discovered, but something made known. It is the disclosure of some new aspect of God's Being—something added to our knowledge of Him. Thus Dadu prays: "Give me each day new devotion, each day a new Name by which to call Thee" (34: 25).

It is true that God has countless names, and each, when used with understanding, has something to teach us of Him.

The Creator has many and diverse names.

Choose the name that comes to mind; thus do the saints practise remembrance.

The Lord who endowed ■ with soul and body, Him do thou worship in thy heart;

Worship Him by that name which best befits the occasion.

(2: 23-24.)

But no one of these names, nor all of them put together, can ever fully utter all that God truly is. The Name of God is something more than any particular form of address the worshipper may use in his approach to Him. The Name of God, in a word, is God made known: God as the worshipper has learned to know Him, and love Him, and trust Him. Thus, while Dadu could say with Kabir, "Call Him Rama, call Him Allah: it is all one", none knew better than he how little the



employment of these names might mean. There is no magical power in the mere mechanical repetition even of that most precious of names, the name of Rama.

Everyone takes the name of Rama, but there is great difference in the use of it;

One returns to earth in various re-births: another is united to the One.

(2: 82.)

Remembrance of the Name, then, can only mean the remembrance of God, and the worship of the Name the worship of God. Dadu bids men cease vexing themselves with idle speculations, and cultivate that spirit of devotion which alone makes worship real.

For Dadu—in this a true disciple of Ramananda—the most beloved of all God's names was Rama. A whole collection of *sakhis* is devoted to the exaltation of the name of Rama, "the symbol of approach to the Unapproachable".

Excellent is the Name: it holds the truth of the three worlds;  
Considering this, O heart, repeat it night and day.

Excellent is the Name: let not the heart forget Hari;

Let His image dwell in the heart: cherish it with every breath.

When thou dost cherish Him with every breath, one day He comes to meet thee;

The Satguru has taught the way of quiet remembrance.

Excellent is the Name: it makes known the Self;

Abandon all other means of approach, and devote thyself to the Name of Rama.

In aught that the lips utter save Thy Name, O Rama,

What place is there in the three realms for this sinful soul?

(2: 4-6, 8, 10.)

The loving condescension of God in thus making Himself known to men is the theme around which all Dadu's richest and tenderest thoughts of God gather. The vast background of mystery and majesty is always there. It is this indeed which gives to the revelation of God's grace its wondrous, heart-searching quality. Dadu can never forget for a moment that it is the Infinite God who has stooped to man in his uttermost need. It is the Almighty Creator who reaches forth His hand

to save. It is the Eternal Spirit, unsearchable, unfathomable, who speaks to man in the innermost recesses of his being His word of comfort and peace.

Omniscient God, by Thy grace alone have I been blessed with vision of Thee.

Thou knowest all; what can I say?

All-knowing God, I can conceal nothing from Thee.

I have nothing that deserves Thy grace.

None can reach Thee by his own efforts: Thou showest Thyself by Thine own grace.

How could I approach Thy presence? By what means could I gain Thy favour? and by what powers of mind or body could I attain to Thee?

It hath pleased Thee in Thy mercy to take me under Thy wing.

Thou alone art the beginning and the end; Thou art the Creator of the three worlds.

Dadu saith: I am nothing and can do nothing.

Verily, even a pigmy can reach Thee by Thy grace.

*(Hymn 334. Psalms of Dadu, No. 94.)*

God is one whose very nature it is to bestow. The whole universe was brought into existence for the good of His creatures.

To what end didst Thou create the world, O Lord? What was Thy divine purpose?

Was it to reveal Thyself, or was it for the salvation of souls?

Was it that Thy servants might know Thee, or was it merely for Thine own pleasure?

Was it that Thou didst desire to be worshipped, or was it only to display Thy magic power?

Was it that such Sport is dear to Thee, and that Thou didst enjoy spreading out the universe?

Says Dadu: O Many-Coloured, expound this unutterable mystery.

*(Hymn 235.)*

The answer is given in the words of two famous couplets (quoted from 15: 50 and 21: 41) as follows:

For others' good He created all, and not for selfish ends.

Heedful for others is the Supreme Being—and perchance some rare saint in this dark age.

The Creator enjoys His Sport: few there are that understand.  
He takes not pleasure in receiving: His pleasure is to bestow.

To the same purpose is this beautiful expression of trust in  
God's loving care for all His creatures:

He alone is my Lord, who supplies the needs of all;  
In His hands is the dispensation of life and death.

He that created all things from first to last, in heaven and earth and  
hell,

That gives to all their being: He is the object of my worship.

He that doeth these things ■ the Creator Spirit: why should I take  
anxious thought?

He that takes thought for all is Dadu's Friend.

In thought, word and deed, put thy faith in the Lord;  
In whom else should the servant of the Creator hope?

There is no toil to the soul: all comes about of itself;  
But they that discern the way of mercy are few.

The Provider is altogether near: He is not afar, O foolish one.  
He knows all things, O ignorant man, and is skilled in bestowing.

It is Rama who takes thought for thee: the Almighty knows all.  
Cherish the thought of Rama, and have no other care.

He that nourished the helpless, unborn babe in the womb,  
Who protected its feeble body amid the fires of the belly,

That mighty Companion is with thee, in the difficult pass where  
many troubles assail thee.

Keep firm hold upon the Lord: let not the mind grow forgetful, O  
brother.

Cherish Rama in thy heart: have faith in Him in thy mind.  
Mighty is the Lord and fulfils the hope of all.

Though the Creator of all is so powerful,  
Yet has He become ■ servant. The whole world reaches out its hands  
to Him.

Blessed, greatly blessed art Thou, O Lord: how incomparable are  
Thy ways!

Lord of all worlds, Thou Thyself remainest detached<sup>1</sup> from all.

(19: 5-9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 21, 23, 24.)

■ *Atm*, destitute, devoid of possessions.

God's love and compassion are shown, not only in His merciful provision for the needs of all, but in His tender forbearance towards men in their folly and disobedience.

All souls may break loose from Rama, but Rama does not break loose from them;

As the raw thread on the spinning wheel is no sooner broken than mended.

*He restores that which is broken, and draws it to Himself.*

None such will be found when the day of opportunity is past.

None such will be found who fashions the body anew,

Who makes the old man a child again, and banishes decay and death.

(34: 33-35.)

How shall the mother forsake her child, unworthy though he be?

Never can she cast him off from her soul, even though she suffer anguish.

The Lord is merciful: His servant is ever heedless.

Yet Hari reckons not up his misdeeds, for the sake of the love He bears him.

(Hymn 426, 1-2.)

I have done much evil: be not thou angry with me.

The Lord is rich in forbearance: to His servant belongs all the blame.

Dadu is the prisoner, Thou the Master who sets him free.

Keep me no longer in bondage, O gracious Lord.

(34: ■, 13.)

Beholding God's wondrous forbearance, Dadu exclaims:

Why, O Unsearchable One, art 'Thou so forbearing towards the shortcomings of Thy creatures?

To which he receives the answer:

In order that, beholding my forbearance, the saints may learn so to act.

(5: 31.)

The reader will not fail to mark in passing the strong ethical note in these passages. One is reminded of the prophet Micah:<sup>1</sup> "He hath shown thee, O man, what is good"—shown thee, by showing Himself, by disclosing His own character to men.

<sup>1</sup> Micah 6: 8.



Nowhere does Dadu approach more closely to a full-orbed theism.

God's love is further exhibited in His sympathy with His suffering creatures, and especially with His suffering saints.

In a moment the Lord reveals Himself, if a man cries to Him. Beholding the humble in distress, He is greatly moved.

He besets him behind and before and takes his burden upon Himself; When the saint is afflicted, then is Hari afflicted. Such is the Creator.

(34: 38-39.)

As the saints delight in God's fellowship, so God delights in the fellowship of His saints (4: 180). In response to their ardent yearning for the vision of His face, the Sought becomes the Seeker, the Beloved the Lover, the Master the Servant (4: 272-3; 3: 147).

It is hardly necessary to ask in what relation the glowing theism of some of the later passages quoted stands to the Védantic framework of Dadu's thought. It is clear, however, that his representation of the Supreme Being as gracious, loving, tender, forgiving, entering into the most intimate personal communion with His servants, is no mere accommodation to the practical demands of the worshipper for a God whom he can truly adore and trust and love. The Name of God, for Dadu, is no pious figment; it is a real disclosure of the Unknown. Thus he is able to assert with full conviction:

I will see the Unseen; I will describe the Indescribable; I will meditate on Govinda alone.

I will fathom the Unfathomable; I will speak about the Unspeakable; I will know the Unknowable, by seeking after Him.

I will approach the Unapproachable; I will die for the sake of the Deathless; I will ford the Unfordable, O Thou Blissful One.

(Hymn 93, 3-5. *Psalms of Dadu*, No. 85.)

In reply to the Emperor Akbar, who is said to have asked:

What is God's nature? What is His form? What is His substance?  
What is His colour?

K

Dadu is reported to have answered:

God's nature is love, God's form is love,  
God's substance ■ love, God's colour is love.

(3: 152.)

There was no truth to which Dadu clung more passionately than that.

Something must now be said of Dadu's conceptions of the Divine Teacher, and of the Word. The instrument of God's self-communication is the *Shabda*, or Word, suggestive of the Creative Word or Wisdom of the Hebrew scriptures, and of the Logos of the Fourth Gospel. The doctrine of the Word is in no sense original to Dadu. It occurs in Kabir<sup>1</sup> and other *bhakti* poets, and is much elaborated in the later teaching of the Kabir Panth. But its history goes much further back. It is closely related to the early brahmanical idea of speech as the utterance of the divine thought. Hence the importance attached, in Hindu belief and practice, to meditation on the mystic syllable "Om" and the supernatural power believed to reside in certain predestined combinations of letters, syllables and diagrams. The "unstruck note" is the voiceless sound (*nāda*) heard by the practiser of Yoga in the state of *samādhi*, or complete detachment from the sensible world.

For Dadu, the *Shabda* is the Creative Word by which all things were brought into being.

In the beginning He created from Himself the syllable "Om";  
From "Om" came forth the five elements and form.

By one Word He created all, so mighty is He.

He that is lacking in power creates first one thing, and then another.

From the Word came forth the five elements; by the five elements<sup>2</sup>  
is the Word uttered.

My Lord created all, but few there are who understand.

(22: 8, 10, 15.)

The *Shabda* is also the Voice of the Eternal speaking in the heart of His worshipper. A careful study of the passages in which the term is used will show that it has always a rational content.

<sup>1</sup> Keay: *Kabir and His Followers*, pp. 87, 171.

<sup>2</sup> That is, from the body, formed of the five elements.

The Word is the milk, the essence of Rama the butter, and some saint  
is the churner;  
Reflecting on the teaching of the Guru, he draws nectar from it.

(1: 31.)

Through the Word the saint is united to Him: his mind dwells upon it.  
How can the saint live without the Word? Then would he perish.  
He who quietly meditates on the Word is united to Him in unbroken  
communion.

The coward flees for his life, but the hero stands firm.

He who reflects on the Word, who fulfils his duties and cherishes the  
Name of Rama in his very soul,  
Who seeks the truth while in the body—he (says Dadu) finds  
salvation.

Why spend money when without cost thy purpose can be achieved?  
Through the Word all is accomplished, Offer not thy vain efforts to  
Rama.

(22: 17–20.)

The *Shabda* searches the heart. It reveals man to himself.

The Word of the saintly Guru, like an arrow, flies forth in all  
directions.

He whom it smites finds salvation. It awakens the sleeper.

(22: 21. Cf. 1: 28.)

Thus the term *Shabda* comes to be used also of the inspired  
utterances of the earthly teacher, as (by Dadu's disciples) of  
his *Bani*, or Oracles.

The mediator of salvation, the ministrant of the Word, is the  
Satguru (*sadguru*), the Divine Master or Teacher. The concep-  
tion of the Satguru, like that of the *Shabda*, is not peculiar to  
Dadu. Our concern is solely with the connotation he gives to it.  
Many passages in the *Bani*, including the selections from "The  
Divine Guru" given in the previous chapter, would appear to  
suggest a complete identification of the Divine Teacher with  
the Supreme Being, and possibly this is the truest interpretation  
one can put upon them. In the opening verses of the *Bani* Dadu  
speaks of the Divine Guru as placing His hand on his head and  
initiating him into divine truth (1: 3). But elsewhere he speaks  
of the Lord (*Mirāñ*) in almost identical terms:

The Lord has dealt kindly with me: He placed His hand on my head.  
Says Dadu: What can this age of darkness do to me? The Lord is  
with me.

(21: 11.)

Again, as in Kabir, there are frequent references to "Guru Govinda", but the context shows Govinda to be no other than God Himself. For example:

Though ■ lac of moons visit thy home, and a crore of suns,  
Without Guru Govinda, thy darkness will not depart.  
Despite the rising of many moons, and the brilliance of countless  
suns,  
Apart from the Name of Niranjana, there is no light. (1: 59-60.)

Or again:

Think upon the excellencies of Govinda, who bestowed sight and  
speech, head and feet,  
Mouth, ears and hands: the Lord of Life, God of all the world.  
He that endowed thee with body and mind, and set them all in  
order,  
That Lord thou rememberest not, transgressing His commands.  
(19: 17, 18.)

Most decisive of all, however, is the direct ascription to God, in many of the hymns, of the title of "Guru".

To whom do all these belong? This question is in my heart.  
To the invisible God (*Ilāhī*), the World-Guru: there is no other.  
(13: 116.)

The World-Guru is awake: the whole world is asleep.  
'Tis when her heart is wounded that the forsaken one wakes in pain.  
(2: 96.)

My Guru, by Himself alone, enjoys His play.  
Himself gives, Himself receives, Himself originates duality.

(Hymn 243, Refrain.)

Such instances could be multiplied.

On the other hand, throughout the *Bani*, the reader is conscious of the unique position assigned to the Satguru or Divine Teacher as the Revealer of God to men. It is hardly too



much to say that the Divine Guru holds a place in Dadu's thought roughly analogous to that of the Holy Spirit in Christian theology. He is an omnipresent, immaterial Person, who takes possession of the heart, making plain the way of approach to God. His function is to awaken the sleeping soul, to impart life, to illuminate, instruct and guide. He speaks within the heart with supreme authority. Key in hand, He opens every door. He leads men into the presence of the very Self. The earthly teacher is to be accepted as a trustworthy guide just in the measure in which he is fully possessed by the Divine Guru. Some of the most striking references to the ministry of the Satguru have already been quoted.

In the *Bani* as now arranged, descriptions of the marks of the true teacher pass readily into laudation of the Divine Guru, and *vice versa*. Where the saint is, there is God; and where God is, there is the saint (4: 181; 15: 22 *et passim*). It should be carefully noticed, however, that the doctrine of the Divine Teacher in Dadu has little in common with later attempts, on the part of the Kabir Panthis, Rādhā Swāmīs and others, to identify the founder of their own sect with the Satguru. For Dadu, the Satguru is not (as in a sense the earthly guru is) the embodiment in human shape of the Eternal Word. He is an invisible, impalpable Presence apprehended in the hidden depths of the soul.

The subject is a fascinating one, but as Dadu himself offers no speculations upon it there is no need to pursue it here beyond the point at which he leaves it. Perhaps the most we can say is that Dadu made the freest use of an already familiar idea which he found helpful, as answering to something profoundly real in his own experience.

#### DADU'S TEACHING REGARDING THE WORLD

This manifold universe, as we have seen, is conceived of by Dadu as having been called into being at a single word. Here we have to recognise the powerful influence of the Islamic doctrine of creation, based on the early Hebrew tradition, in giving a theistic bent to Dadu's thought.

It is true that the reference (22: 10, etc.) to the creation of

all things "in a moment" has in view rather the timelessness of God than the mere rapidity of the creative act. The entire universe-to-be was present to the divine thought when the Word was uttered. For Dadu, the utterance of God's thought in creation was clearly an orderly process involving some kind of logical progression. From God came forth the Word; from the Word arose the five elements, and from these the whole universe came into being (22: 8 ff.). How from the one came forth the many was indeed, as Dadu repeatedly confesses, an insoluble mystery. He has no elaborate cosmogony to offer. The subject was not one in which he seems to have had any very deep interest. Practically all he has to say about it will be found in the three short chapters, all of a purely devotional character, entitled "The Almighty", "The Word", and "Origins" (Sections 21, 22, and 28).

Dadu's view of the Creative Word presents a striking contrast to the Sāṃkhya idea of a gradual evolution of the material universe, at the beginning of each new aeon, as a result of the disturbance set up by the presence of Soul or Spirit in the equipoise of the three *guṇas* or qualities which determine the form Nature or Matter shall assume: an evolution in which the Primal Soul has neither part nor lot. Yet Dadu would seem to accept, or at least to assume, without question the "25 principles" of the Sāṃkhya system, along with its doctrine of the three "*guṇas*".<sup>1</sup> He also makes frequent use of the term "Aloneness", which in the Sāṃkhya and Yoga systems represents the final stage in the soul's emancipation from the world of Nature or Matter. It should of course be remembered that the category of the three *guṇas*, with much else in the Sāṃkhya philosophy, has been taken over into the Vedānta, and considerably modified in the process.

Dadu, as we should expect, is still more at home in the Vedantic conception of the universe as illusion (*māyā*): as the sport or play (*līlā*) of the Supreme Being. The idea intended to be conveyed by the latter term is that, while the universe has its ultimate source in God, He is in no wise involved or entangled in its processes. God is the Nirguṇa, the Unconditioned. It would be a limitation of His absolute being to imagine

<sup>1</sup> See especially 4: 51, 128.

Him as in any degree subject to the conditions of finite existence. He is thus entirely detached and aloof from the world, stands wholly outside the causal chain in which all existences are bound; and yet, in some quite unaccountable way, He fills and pervades all. Different schools of Vedantist thought have differed widely as to the degree of reality to be ascribed to the phenomenal world. The one point on which all are agreed is that God is the one alone Real, and that all other existences can be spoken of as real only as they find their ultimate meaning in Him.

It is not always easy to determine precisely (if we are to look for precision) in what sense Dadu uses the word *maya* or "illusion." At times—one might almost say generally—it might seem to mean no more than the writer of the first epistle of St. John meant when he wrote: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. . . . For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world" (1 John 2: 15-16).

Says Dadu: Love not this world for a single instant;  
Birth, death, and return consume the body every moment.

The lure of the world enslaves body, mind and soul;  
Through knowledge some enlightened saint obtains release.

The mind is the male elephant, Maya the female; this world is the  
dense forest.

Therein the stupid, demented creature knows no fear.

(12: 50-52.)

Here obviously "the world" is not to be equated either with the habitable earth which is the scene of man's pilgrimage, or with the phenomenal universe of which he forms an infinitesimal part. It is "*samsāra*", the world of man's "wanderings": it is the ceaseless round of re-birth in which he is involved. Under the spell of the doctrine of *maya* it is seldom that, in Dadu's poems, these widely different ideas are kept clearly apart. For him it is enough that the whole world of created being is held in the bondage of *maya*. But the dominant idea is always the enthronement of self, and the consequent enslavement of the heart to base desires.



Beholding the power of Maya, the heart grows very proud.  
 It is blind and perceives not. What can the Creator do?  
 Beholding Maya the mind is elated, the heart swells with pleasure.  
 This is the way of the soul, but it attains not its object.  
 Direct not the mind's aim towards Maya;  
 Later thou wilt have cause to repent thy misspent arrow.  
 The heart of butter becomes stone, drinking the delights of Maya;  
 The heart of stone becomes butter, enjoying the delights of Rama.  
 The heart is destroyed by Maya, as milk is destroyed by vinegar.  
 Is there any in the world who can make the heart whole?  
 Through contact with the foul it becomes foul; thus all is befouled.  
 When the mind touches what is fair, it becomes fair.  
 The heart is ravished by Maya: it is intoxicated with the pleasures  
 of sense;  
 Forsaking the real, it is enamoured of false appearances.  
 Those who depart in the company of Maya return not.  
 Maya is a witch. How many has she devoured!

(12: 16, 18, 19, 21-23, 25.)

Gods, men, and sages has she subdued, yea even Brahmā, Vishnu,  
 and Mahesh;  
 Calling the poison nectar, all have drunk of it. (4: 95, 124.)

At other times Dadu would seem to preach a pure illusionism.  
 We are not, we are not. Rama, the Truth, is in all.  
 Earth and heaven are not, air and light are not.  
 Sun, moon and stars are not, nor the consuming fire.  
 The five elements are not, the whole world is not,  
 Our bodies and souls are not, nor yet the beholder of this play.  
 There is neither tree nor shadow, neither bird nor landscape,  
 Neither dweller on the mountain, nor inhabitant of the ocean.  
 Sea and dry land are not, the entire universe is not.  
 Beginning and end are not. Rama alone abides. (Hymn 394.)

That this is an outburst of devotional feeling rather than a  
 flight of metaphysics is plain from other hymns of a similar  
 character, such as the following:

Thou alone art, and all is Thine; neither I nor mine have any being;  
 Yet man calleth them, I and mine.



Thou alone art and the Universe is Thy sport;  
Yet fools shout out, I and mine.

Thou alone art and the Universe is Thine,  
Yet man in his conceit saith, I and mine.

Thou alone art, and death cannot kill Thee;  
But I and mine will presently die.

Thou alone art; Thou fillest all;  
But I and mine will soon dissolve.

Thou alone art; Thou dwellest within Thyself,  
But I and mine will soon dissolve.

Thou alone art; Thou art Thine Own Self;  
But I and mine are nowhere.

Thou alone art, and Thine alone will cross this ocean.  
Dadu has found this truth by meditation.

(Hymn 50. *Psalm of Dadu*, No. 71.)

In some passages, as we have seen, God is represented as the Magician or Juggler who bewilders men by His magic. Sometimes the glory of God in creation is so strongly emphasised that the "magic" displayed becomes almost indistinguishable from creative power.<sup>1</sup>

O Charmer, all this is Thy doing: Thou hast charmed the universe.  
O God, Thou hast charmed air and water, Thou hast charmed the  
holy sages, and sun and moon.

Upholder of all things, Thou hast charmed the seven seas and the  
eight mountain ranges;  
Life of the universe, Thou hast charmed the three realms. All the  
worlds worship Thee.

Thou hast charmed Shiva, Vishnu and the sage Nārada; Thou hast  
charmed the whole company of the gods;  
Thou hast charmed Indra also, and the Serpent god; Thou hast  
charmed the holy sages who worship Thee.

<sup>1</sup> In Vedantic monism *Māyā* (Illusion) takes the place of *Prakṛiti* (the Nature or Matter of Sāṃkhya dualism). *Māyā* is thus not an independent principle, like *Prakṛiti*, but simply a display of the magic power (*Shakti*) of the Supreme Being. In the *Shākta* systems the idea is carried a stage further, and *Māyā* or *Shakti* (power) is treated as the active principle in the godhead (popularly represented as a goddess) and becomes the chief, or sole object of worship. Despite his profound distrust of Shaktism and all its works, Dadu is not uninfluenced by its teaching.

Unapproachable art Thou, invisible, infinite, without beginning or end: none can comprehend Thy ways.

O beautiful One, this glory befits Thee. Dadu offers himself in sacrifice to Him we know not.

(Hymn 92.)

At other times, and more often, *maya* is represented as an antagonistic force, blinding the eyes of men and leading them on to destruction. Here she is personified as the cruel temptress who lures men to their ruin, and is endowed with the familiar attributes of a "personal Devil".

All men stand with folded hands before Maya.

They have broken loose from Him who created them from a drop of water.

Maya is the enemy of the soul: let none set his love upon her.

Regard Maya ■ thou wouldst hell. This is the way of the saints.

Leading the mind astray Maya has distracted the soul.

Maddened with the wine of Maya, it has forgotten the Beloved.

Assuming manifold forms, the Enchantress has bound all.

She has destroyed the wretched world, making it forget the Name of Hari.

Maya is sweet of speech; she bends low at one's feet.

Once she has entered the body she drags forth the liver and devours it.

Maya slays all souls: she tears them to pieces and devours them:

When she has destroyed men the world laments that it put its trust in her.

Noose in hand Maya lies secretly in wait for her victim.

If any trusts her, she casts it about his neck.

(12: 94, 100, 101, 110, 157, 164, 168.)

It is one consequence of Dadu's uncompromising monism that, even in its seemingly malign aspects, *maya* is found to have its source in God.

He has devised this wondrous play and Himself remained concealed. He has thrown the curtain of Maya across the doorway, so that none may perceive Him.

Planting desire in the soul He has set it a-wandering.

All have passed away crying, O Beloved, Beloved; but He has not disclosed Himself.

What I desire I find not, the vision of the Lord;  
 Many are His wiles, manifold the disguises He assumes.  
 His play has cast its spell on all souls, making a mock of them.  
 What is this that He has done, that He Himself remains hidden?  
 As the performer's puppet entices the monkey,  
 So has the Maya of Rama deceived all the world.

(12: 82-84, 86, 110.)

Doubtless the ordinary Hindu, and quite possibly Dadu himself, would be disposed to deny that there is any real contradiction in the varied aspects of *maya* above presented. To the soul entangled in self, ■ Dadu is never weary of reminding us, all appears to be entangled; when the soul is set free, all becomes plain (1: 132; 18: 33). With the merciful, the upright, the pure, as the Hebrew Psalmist puts it, God shows Himself merciful, upright, and pure; with the froward He shows Himself froward (Psalm 18, 25-26). Or, to quote a passage already cited:

When the Magician is discovered His jugglery is seen as it truly is.  
 Dadu saith: Verily he alone findeth the Juggler who is detached  
 from His jugglery.

(Hymn 306.)

But when all has been said it is hard to resist the conclusion that we have here two groups of ideas emanating from widely different sources which are made to coalesce with considerable difficulty. The sheer malignity of *maya* ill accords with a view of the universe that conceives it as a manifestation either of the playful magic or of the creative activity of a gracious and merciful God. And it is to the thought of the universe and man as the handiwork of an all-wise and merciful Creator that Dadu constantly returns.

He that fashioned the universe and established it without  
 foundations,  
 How should He forget us? Such is the witness of the saints.  
 The Lord who has endowed us with body and soul, Him do thou  
 serve in the depths of thy heart.  
 On every occasion that offers, worship His Name alone.

He who created me, the ■■■■ is my Master.  
I am the servant of that Rama who made each one of us.

(20: 7-9.)

But the problem is not peculiar to Dadu. It pervades all Hindu thinking on the subject of *maya*.

#### DADU'S TEACHING REGARDING MAN

The dominant school of Hindu philosophy boldly affirms the complete identity of the human spirit and the divine. To this school, both by tradition and by the mystical bent of his own mind, Dadu may with some justice be said to belong. Numerous passages from the *Bani* could be quoted which appear to declare in the most unambiguous terms the essential oneness of the human soul and the supreme Brahma.

Many false and blind gurus there are who lead men astray.  
When the true Guru is found, the soul becomes Brahma.

(2: 125.)

The soul is in bondage: when set free it is even as Brahma.  
Thou beholdest two, but in truth there is no second.  
The soul is in the power of *karma* (deeds); freed from *karma* it is  
Brahma;  
Where the spirit is, there is the Supreme Spirit: error has passed  
away.  
The transient springs up in this vessel of the body;  
When the abiding is found, the soul and Brahma are not two but one.

(27: 20-22.)

Dadu's interest in the doctrine of identity is, as we have already pointed out, not theoretical but practical. It answers to his profound sense of unbroken union with God as the goal of all spiritual aspiration. We have seen how readily the terminology of the Vedanta lends itself to the expression of devotional feeling. With the *bhakti* writers the idea of complete spiritual union is always on the point of passing over into the metaphysical belief implied in the classical affirmation: "Thou art That."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Tat tvam asi.*



Thus speaks the Self, Niranjana, the Source of every excellency:  
I and my worshipper are not two: We ■■■ wholly one.

(Hymn 174, Refrain.)

He is my life who permeates my whole being.  
The soul and the Beloved are not separate: they dwell together.

(Hymn 206, 3.)

It is equally clear, however, that ■ real distinction is implied, not only in isolated expressions which might be freely cited from the *Bani*, but in Dadu's whole conception of the relation of the human soul to God. Obviously there can be no union in the sphere of absolute identity. Moral and spiritual oneness involves some kind of distinction, relative or absolute, between the two made one.

In water is sky, in the sky water: yet is the sky distinct.  
So does Brahma dwell in the soul. Consider this mystery.

As thou beholdest thy face in a mirror, or a reflection in water,  
So is the indwelling Rama present to all.

Thy Friend is close to thee: know thyself.  
Seek Him not afar: know Him as the reflection.

The lotus grows in the water: how is it yet separate from the water?  
Its whole love is for the moon: thus is it not with the water.

By meditating on the One the heart becomes separated from all  
others.

Niranjana is not the heart, yet freely dwells within it.<sup>1</sup>

(18: 2, 3, 8, 9, 10.)

It is the Vedantic background of their thought that explains the oft-reiterated cry of the *bhakti* saints that they do not desire "salvation" (release), but the perpetual vision of God's face.<sup>2</sup> Absorption into God, in the full Vedanta sense, would mean the end of the blessed communion with Him which they have enjoyed in this present life, and which for them constitutes the supreme bliss of the life hereafter.

Grant me, O grant me the vision of Thyself. I desire not salvation.

(Hymn 313, Refrain.)

<sup>1</sup> Pt. Chandrika Prasad (Ajmer text, note, p. 250) suggests the rendering "the heart is not directed to Niranjana", but this ■■■ less in harmony with the context.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Kabir: "Thou art merged in all—but I would not utterly be merged in Thee" (*Bijak*, *Sakhi*, 260).

Again, there are times when Dadu's profound sense of God as the one alone Real would seem to put an infinite distance between the creature and his Creator.

That which is born and dies is the soul: it is not the omnipresent Rama.

He who is immune from birth and death, the same is my Master.

That which "is not" comes into being, not that which "is."

He is invisible, without beginning or end. That which comes into being is of *maya*.

If the soul were this Doer, why should it suffer misery?

Why should it be in the power of *karma*? Why should it enslave itself?

(20: 15, 20, 21.)

It is true that by the "soul" is here meant man as a weak mortal, fast held in the bondage of *maya*, not the divine spirit within him, which is imperishable. But behind all is the idea of God as the Eternal and Abiding, in contrast to the feeble, perishable souls He has created.

We are not, we are not; Rama is all in all.

Our bodies and souls are not, nor yet the beholder of this spectacle.

(Hymn 394, Refrain and Verse 2.)

But it is above all in his conception of man as a morally responsible being, and of human sin not as mere weakness, or blindness, or finitude, but as disobedience, wrong-doing, culpability, that the soul of man stands over against the Eternal Spirit, the Ruler and Judge, in utter, irresolvable contrast.

If the Lord should call me to account, then would He behead and impale me.

If, of His goodness and compassion, He forgives, then do I live indeed.

(34: 86.)

Dadu's view of the constitution of man's nature is of necessity deeply influenced by Hindu psychology. Man, unfortunately for himself, is not pure spirit. He is possessed of a gross material body, the temporary abode of the spirit, which perishes at death. He has also a subtle, or psychic, body which takes on the impress of the deeds done in the body, and is in fact the sum

of its natural desires, impulses and volitions. This impalpable body survives physical death, migrates from body to body, and determines the state into which the soul shall be re-born, and the nature of the body it shall assume.

Most important of all, within this subtle body, man has a mind, a sense of individuality, and ~~an~~ intellect, which are also the product of, and held in the power of *maya*. The peculiarity of the Samkhya psychology that chiefly concerns us at the moment is that the mental processes of thinking, feeling, and willing, which we of the West are wont to regard as activities of the spirit, are relegated to the realm of Nature or *maya*, from which it is the aim of the soul to find deliverance. In contrast with the idea of the development of the mental powers which we associate with human personality, it is taught that all of these—thought, emotion, volition—have to be completely stilled to enable the spirit to establish contact with the world of spirit with which it is essentially one. Man's very consciousness of himself as an individual distinct from others—the assertion "I am"—lies at the root of his enslavement. With the passing of that illusion, with the recognition of the sublime truth, "Thou art That", comes release.

Without some understanding of this psychological background, much of Dadu's terminology can hardly be intelligible to the Western reader. It is not suggested that Dadu at all points rigidly adheres to these philosophical categories, but they undoubtedly exert a strong influence not only on his language but on his thought. This will become clear when we come to consider Dadu's teaching on the subject of salvation, and of the devotional exercises proper for the nurture of the spiritual life. Even when the characteristically Hindu view of the nature of man is not accepted in its full implications, its tendency is ever to lead men to turn their backs on the world of ordinary experience, in the direction of pure quietism.

As the tortoise draws in its limbs, with mind and senses concentrated on their proper object,

So attach thyself to the Name of Niranjana, and turn away from every other.<sup>1</sup>

(1: 89.)

<sup>1</sup> cf. *Gita*, II, 58. "When such a one draws in his sense-instruments altogether from the objects of the sense-instruments, as a tortoise draws in its limbs, he has wisdom abidingly set" (*Trans. Barnett*).

It is sometimes stated<sup>1</sup> that Dadu rejected the doctrine of transmigration. That the conception of the "eighty-four lacs" of births through which the soul has to pass was but one feature of the dark picture of human misery which he took over unquestioningly from current Hinduism may be readily acknowledged. There are indications of an effort at a wider interpretation of the idea. In a single lifetime the soul may pass through many births. The "eighty-four lacs" are within the soul itself. But a deliberate "rejection" of the doctrine would be hard to establish.

The soul's eighty-four lacs of re-births take place within the material body;

It passes through several births every day, but none knows it.

All the qualities that pervade the soul, these are its true incarnations. Put from thee this coming and going: mighty is the Creator.

All kinds of qualities come and invade all souls;

Within the heart they are born and die, but none knows it.

The souls are unaware of their births which are taking place moment by moment;

They undergo the "eighty-four lacs", but none perceives it.

Coming and going, this heart assumes many forms in one day;

When the transmigration of the heart ceases, then is it taken up (into God).

Night and day this heart wanders, destroying the impalpable soul. Make this heart steadfast and receive the salvation of the spirit.

Now fire, now water, now earth, now sky, now air impart their qualities;

Now the elephant, now the creeping insect. The man is changed into a beast.

The pig, the dog, the jackal, the lion, the snake, all dwell within the heart;

The elephant, the grub, yea all living things. But the pandits know it not.

(11: 2-9.)

The above passage is from the short collection<sup>2</sup> of sayings entitled "The Subtle [i.e. Inward] Birth". But the suggestive idea it contains is not followed up, and innumerable passages could be cited in support of the traditional view.

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, art. "Dadu".



Not less suggestive is the seed-thought to be found in Dadu's emphatic repudiation of the whole idea of caste, intimately bound up as that institution is with the doctrine of transmigration.

Breaking Brahma in pieces, they have divided Him among their  
several factions;

Forsaking the perfect Brahma, they have bound the knot of error.

(13: 50.)

Each sits in the company of his own caste-fellows;

The servant of Rama knows no such distinctions.

Each has filled his vessel with water and called it his own;

The water of the One Well dispels error from the mind.

They have given the water many names, they have formed many  
different castes.

Say, who is the Speaker, and where is He contained?

When thou considerest the complete Brahma, then are all spirits one;

When thou lookest on bodily attributes, there are castes many and  
diverse.

(13: 123, 128, 130.)

According to Hindu ideas the caste into which a man is born is strictly determined by the deeds done in a previous life. Dadu's teaching cuts at the very root of the caste system, thus challenging by implication the religious assumption on which it rests. The operation of the law of *karma*, however, remains, involving the migration of souls from one body to another.

#### DADU'S TEACHING REGARDING THE WAY OF SALVATION

Salvation, on its negative side, means for Dadu escape from the pain and misery of earthly existence by the breaking of the bondage of *karma* or deeds. Positively, it means the entrance by the soul on that state of uninterrupted fellowship with God in which is its true life. Philosophically stated, it is the return of the soul to that plane of being to which it rightly belongs: its passing from the world of the transitory and illusory into the world of the eternally real, and thus from the limitations inseparable from finite being into the perfect freedom and unutterable bliss of the life of God. Ethically, it is the deliverance

of the soul from moral frustration and defeat, into victory and peace. As we examine Dadu's teaching regarding the way of salvation we shall see that all these elements have a real place in his thought.

At the root of the soul's enslavement is the fatal dominance of the idea of self. Philosophically this is interpreted as man's conception of himself as a distinct individual: the affirmation, "I am". Practically it is identified with the egoistic principle in human nature, and becomes the equivalent of pride, self-sufficiency, envy, self-seeking. For Dadu, as the quotations that follow will clearly illustrate, the idea is primarily (one might even say, wholly) ethical. Self gets in a man's way in two aspects especially. In the first place, it leads him to set up his own will in opposition to the will of God as an independent good. And secondly, it affects his entire relations with his fellows by leading him to look upon them as rivals or competitors for the good things of life, rather than as spiritual beings, sharers with him in the divine life which lies hidden in the depths of every human soul.

My enemy "I" is dead; now none can slay me.

'Tis I who slay myself: I have died, and live.

While the thought of self remains, so long are there two.

When this selfhood is destroyed, then there is no second.

Then only wilt thou find the Beloved, when "I and mine" are wholly lost.

When "I and mine" are no more, then shalt thou find the pure vision.

"I and mine" are a load upon the head; thou diest with the weight of it;

By the grace of the Guru, remove it and lay it down.

In front of "Me" stands "I"; for this reason He remains hidden;

When this selfhood passes away, the Beloved is revealed.

Hide thyself where none can see thee;

Behold, and show forth the Beloved. So shalt thou find perpetual happiness.

If there be no inward thought of self, but the mouth yet utters the words "I" and "Thou",

Make not this a matter of reproach. Thus do they (the soul and God) hold fellowship ■■■ with another.

When men behold the worshipper who, abandoning self, is wholly  
devoted to Rama,  
Then are all led towards the Master.

(23: 12, 13, 17-19, 28-30.)

These mystical utterances have to be read in conjunction with such direct allusions to the will of God as we find in the passage already quoted (p. 90) from "Supplication", for example:

What was pleasing to Thee was one thing, what I have done is  
another.

If Thou wilt have mercy grant me release: if not, there is no place for  
me.

What was pleasing to myself have I done, not what was pleasing to  
Thee.

Dadu is a sinner. I have beheld my heart within.

(34: 83, 84.)

The social aspect of self-conquest, to which further reference will be made in connection with Dadu's ethical teaching, is illustrated by the following couplets, from the section entitled "Goodwill":

To abandon selfhood, to worship Hari, to give up worldly desires in  
body and mind,

To cherish goodwill towards all creatures: this, says Dadu, is the sum  
of religion.

He who bears no enmity to any creature is the true saint.

There is but one Spirit: there is no enemy.

I have made diligent search, and there is no other:

In every man is the one Spirit, be he Hindu or Musalman.

When thou lookest in the mirror of doubt thou beholdest two;

When error passes away, dubiety is dispelled: then is there no  
second.

To whom shall one bear enmity, since there is no other?

From whose body all sprang, He is in all alike.

(29: 2, 4, 5, 9, 10.)

Salvation is thus seen to lie in deliverance from the illusion of duality, which prompts man in his foolish pride to set himself

up ■ a "doer" in opposition to the Eternal Spirit within him, and which vitiates at the source all his relations with his fellow creatures. More simply, it lies in victory over himself.

But, so deeply is the soul enmeshed in the net of illusion that there is no hope of deliverance through its own unaided efforts. Book knowledge is of no avail. Scholars and sages have worn themselves out poring over the sacred books without learning their secret. Fasts, pilgrimages, austerities, temple-worship—in a word, all the external means by which men seek to win salvation—have proved futile. God is not without, but within. The heart is His temple. But how shall weak and blinded man approach Him, the Unsearchable, the Invisible, the Unknowable? By what Name shall he call Him? What worship shall he offer Him?

To all these questions Dadu's answer is: Salvation is of God. Only through the grace of the Divine Guru, the mysterious Revealer of God, can a man lay down the burden of "I and mine" with which he is laden. Only by the drawing aside of the curtain which veils his eyes can he truly see. Only through the revealed Word can he discover the "way of approach to the Unapproachable".

Only through Thee can I meet with Thee, and that in a moment of time.

Never of myself can this thing be, though countless ages pass.

(94: 80.)

If thou hast not yet known that the Name of Rama is the quintessence of truth,

Then, O foolish and ignorant heart, thou wilt one day repent.

The world is an ocean of sorrow: Rama is the ocean of bliss;

Abandoning vain works, betake thee to the ocean of bliss.

The world is the ocean. In it, the Name of Rama is the true boat.

Do not delay. Now is the auspicious time, now is the day of opportunity.

If, while there is yet opportunity, men take not Rama's Name and His alone,

Then at the last we shall indeed speak it, when we face our enemy, the Lord of Death.

(2: 27, 29, 30, 36.)



Apart from the Doer alone, there is none who can deliver the soul;  
The heart is sore troubled in this world, without Rama.

Those whom Thou preservest, O Doer, find salvation;  
If Thou withdrawest Thy hand, they sink in the world-ocean.

Thou art the one Preserver: destroyers ■■■ many.  
Thou Thyself seest that Dadu has no other but Thee.

Without Thee the whole world sinks to the lower regions;  
Stretch forth Thy hand and draw it forth, O Doer. Grant Thine aid  
speedily.

The Doer is the Saviour of all orphaned human souls;  
Make supplication to Rama that none may be destroyed.

(34: 53-55, 58, 60.)

The salvation of which Dadu speaks is not a thing of the future, but something to be laid hold of here and now. Such an opportunity may never come again.

While the patient is alive they say: After death he will be freed from his sickness.

Nay, rather use such remedies now ■ will allay the burning pain of this present life.

What avails that medicine that fails to relieve the pain?  
Provide a remedy that will cure the sufferer of his disease.

(13: 51, 52.)

If the Lord be before the mind in life, He will likewise be before the mind in death.

Says Dadu: Let none take account of living or dying. (8: 17.)

Like other *bhakti* writers, Dadu is constantly insisting on the priceless opportunity of this present life.

O take not away my life till I have beheld Thee.  
If I be separated from Thee now, how shall I meet Thee again? Not  
thus can one know Thee a second time.

(Hymn 18, Refrain and Verse 1.)

Thou wilt not have this body again and again, O foolish one. Why  
dost thou squander it idly?

(Hymn 338, Refrain.)

How priceless is this life, O brother, in which thou mayest meet with  
 Rama, thy Lord;  
 In which the soul may rejoice in His love, and ever dwell in blessed  
 communion with Him.  
 O man, such a life will not come again. Why then (says Dadu) cast  
 away this precious jewel?

(Hymn 34, Refrain, and Verses 1 and 4.)

The only fitting response to the salvation offered is to accept  
 it in simple faith and gratitude. The way of approach to God  
 is the way of loving trust and devotion, in a word, the way of  
*bhakti*. Without this all is vain.

He who can read but the letter *alif* of the One Allah,  
 The same has mastered all the learning of the Quran and other  
 sacred books.

Says Dadu: This body is the cage, the heart the parrot within it.  
 When it can repeat but the name of Allah, it has become a *hāfiz* <sup>1</sup>

(2: 89-90.)

How many have spent a lifetime blackening paper, composing Vedas  
 and Puranas!

The enlightened reads but the single letter of the Beloved.

The letter of love perchance some rare one reads.

Without love, how many readers there are!

Seldom is one found who reads the scroll of love;

But what profits it, without love, to have read the Vedas and  
 Puranas and other scriptures?

(13: 102-4. Cf. 3: 118-19.)

Dadu has much to say of the simple methods of devotion  
 appropriate to the worshipper whose whole trust is in a wise  
 and merciful Creator.

He that does all is the Creator Spirit. Why should I take anxious  
 thought?

He that takes thought for all is Dadu's Friend.

There is no toil to the soul; all comes about of itself.

But few are they that discern the way of mercy.

(19: 7-8.)

<sup>1</sup> One who can recite the whole Quran accurately from memory.

Thou hast no power with the Master. Seek not to wrest anything from Him by thy austerities.

Cry out rather with thy pain. By thy weeping what is to be will come to pass.

Abandon "knowledge" and "contemplation", self-torture and the practice of Yoga.

Choose to know the pangs of separation, and forsake all delights.

(3: 73, 74.)

In some auspicious moment, when the heart dwells in the Name of Niranjana,

Then, in a single instant, all its *karma* is destroyed.

With ease will all be accomplished. The power of material things, and of the senses, will be destroyed.

Through cherishing Rama in the heart the bondage of works (*karma*) is broken.

(2: 12-13.)

But, while salvation is not to be achieved through man's own efforts, it is no primrose path that leads to a saving knowledge of God. No man stumbles by accident, ■ it were, into the way of life. If Dadu seems to place little value on austerities, it is because of his profound distrust of the idea that anything man is able to do can either win, or merit, salvation. He himself had tried that way and met only bitter defeat and misery. Nevertheless, the attainment of his goal demands every power of mind and heart that man can bring to it. *Bhakti* claims nothing less than the surrender of the entire being to God.

Worship ■ thy God Niranjana. Present as thy sacrificial vessels the five senses.

Sprinkle ■ sandal-wood both mind and body. Perform thy worship by fixing all thy thoughts upon Him.

All speak of "*bhakti, bhakti*", but none understands what true *bhakti* is.

*Bhakti* offered to the Lord fills the whole body.

(4: 279, 280.)

To know the joy of the divine companionship the soul must first taste the anguish of separation. To behold the wonder of God's grace it must first sound the depths of its own helplessness and need.

Cry out with thine own pain, not with that of another.  
He does well to cry out in agony in whose heart the wound is.

(3: 84.)

Where is lacking the ardour of love, worship is even as water where  
there is no thirst.

(Hymn 428, 2.)

The world dies for the sake of Maya. Rarely does one die for the sake  
of the Beloved.

Behold, though all the world is ablaze, yet will not men forsake it  
for a moment.

(12: 71.)

Without a torturing thirst, how should one taste the joy of  
communion?

O God, give me an aching desire to behold the vision of the  
Absent One.

Attachment springs not up without the pain of separation: how else  
can there be loving devotion?

Without love all is false, exert thyself as thou wilt.

The pain of separation is not born of words. Attachment is not born  
of words.

Love thou findest not through words. Let none put his trust in them.

(3: 48, 110, 111.)

By learning I cannot find love; by learning no attachment is born;  
By learning no pang springs up until self be lost.

Only when talking and listening are past, and "self" and "other"  
are destroyed,

Only when "I" and "thou" are no more, is Brahma fully revealed.

He whose very blood becomes water for the Lord's sake,

Whose very bones are dried up, the same shall find Him.

In thy devotion grind and strain out as fine flour both body and  
mind;

Not otherwise will the pain of the soul ever depart.

(23: 38-41.)

The life of the true *bhakti* is thus one of unwearied seeking,  
and stern self-discipline. The vision of God is for those who seek  
Him with the whole heart.



Great stress is laid on the necessity of bringing "this mind"—"this heart" as the English reader would more naturally say—under control. The mind has to be recalled from the objects of sense towards which it is ever reaching out, and directed inwards.

This much do of thyself, Bring body and mind into a state of calm;  
Restrain the senses, and cultivate a simple mode of life.

The soul is in sore straits: it is enmeshed in nine maunds of yarn.  
Here and there may ■ wise man be found who has been set free  
through the instruction of the Guru.

(2: 82-83.)

Here we find ourselves moving once more among the categories of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga psychology. The triad—mind, individuation, and intelligence—form together the "inner organ" of the natural man, as distinct from soul or spirit. The mind may turn outwards or inwards. When it looks out upon the world through the windows of the senses it roams about in all directions, becoming ever more deeply entangled in the manifold, i.e. in the snare of *maya*. When it turns inwards it becomes unified through its gaze being directed towards the One. The senses then follow the direction of the mind, and so the whole body is made subservient to the life of the spirit. By gradual discipline (in which the regulation of the breathing plays a part) the mind has to be trained in habits of meditation, and thus slowly weaned from the desire to wander elsewhere. Some of the more characteristic passages, from the section entitled "The Mind", were quoted in the previous chapter.

In this difficult task, of bringing the mind under control, the way of *bhakti* has the inestimable advantage of supplying an adequate motive. Without some strong inward compulsion the mind cannot remain fixed. Love for God supplies that compulsion. The heart which has drunk deep of the joys of fellowship with Him loses all taste for other delights. By meditation love grows; and with the increase of love the power of meditation also increases.

Instigating the body, the senses have blinded the mind.  
Forsaking the Lord, the Satguru, behold, it roams madly about.

Without Rama the mind is ■ pauper; it covets the three worlds.  
When it becomes attached to Rama, there is no more complaint of poverty.

The mind that is subject to the senses goes forth in desire towards every living thing;

Before the base mind the three worlds dance around.

Bring the senses under control, then why should they go forth in desire?

The stable spirit comes and seats itself on the throne.

Mind and desire have conspired together to make the soul a buffoon;  
It wanders about at the bidding of the senses: the strumpet Maya makes it dance.

The actor (mind) dances before the actress (desire), and the actress applauds;

The actor sings before the actress, and she delights in his performance.

The five senses are evil spirits, the mind is Guardian of the fields (Bhairava);

They worship the goddess Desire, morning, noon and night.

Alive, they plunder all the world; dead, they plunder the gods.  
To whom shall one make complaint? All spend their days in the service of these three.

(10: 58-65.)

While the mind is unstable, so long there is no contact.

When the mind grows stable, with ease will He be found.

How can the mind remain firm without some resting-place? It wanders to and fro.

Only then will it become stable, when thou bringest it with remembrance of God.

Where with steadfast mind thou takest His Name,

There, says Dadu, is Rama.

Delight in the remembrance of Hari; then will the mind be steadfast.

When it has tasted the fellowship of love, it will not move away a single step.

When it is enmeshed in the One within, it tires of all other attractions;  
Firmly established there, it wanders not elsewhere.

The crow is perched on the boat in mid-ocean;

When it has grown weary of flying hither and thither, it comes firmly to rest there.

Then only does my spirit find peace and happiness, when my mind  
 has become stable,  
 Steadfastly fixed on Rama—if one has learned this secret.  
 The pure mind is stable: its joy is in the Name of Rama.  
 So shalt thou find the Vision of Him who is supreme and perfect  
 Bliss.

(10: 13-18, 21, 22.)

As smoke rises from the fire and is at once dispersed,  
 So the mind, separated from Rama, is dissipated in all directions.  
 Since the day it forsook its home the mind has never returned;  
 Like the smoke of the fire it seeks food and finds none.  
 Body and mind have reached forth and attached themselves to  
 everything;  
 Perchance has some rare soul come back to dwell within.  
 How can it return, when the mind has thus spread itself abroad?  
 By the cord of the "Easy Way" (says Dadu), may it return to its  
 home.

(10: 66-69.)

Day by Day be intoxicated with Rama, day by day let thy love  
 increase;  
 Day by day drink of the essence of Rama, day by day behold the  
 mirror within the body;  
 Day by day forget the limitations of the body, day by day let the  
 senses be repressed,  
 Day by day let the devices of the mind perish; day by day will the  
 glory be revealed.  
 The body remains in the world, but the soul is with Rama;  
 Nothing invades it, neither death nor fire nor pain nor thirst.  
 When the soul leaves the company of the body and takes its seat in  
 the regions of Hari,  
 Then is it devoid of fear: no limitation can possess it.

(18: 25-28.)

The student of Christian mysticism will be struck by many interesting points of resemblance between its account of the several stages of the soul's journey in the course of its ascent to God, and that given by Dadu. Dadu's terminology is derived from both Muslim and Hindu sources. In the section of the *Bani* entitled "Spiritual Knowledge" the four main stages of the "Inward Way", as taught by the Sufis (Muhammadan

mystics), are made to correspond with the four "states" (waking, dreaming, dreamless sleep, and final absorption into Brahma) which, in the Vedānta, represent successive stages in the soul's apprehension of the Real.

Thus, detachment (technically the "Void" (*shūnya*)), when associated with the gross material body, brings the worshipper to the plane of the subtle, or psychic body, that is, from the "waking" to the "dreaming" state. This phase Dadu identifies with the stage of progress known to the Sufis as *ash-Sharī'at* (the Law), when the aspirant is still subject to external rules, and the soul is inclined towards the love of God. Similarly, on the plane of the psychic body, detachment carries the soul to the next higher stage—that is, from the state of "dreaming" to that of "dreamless sleep", and corresponds to *at-Tarīqat* (the Path), when the soul is purified from worldly desires, and the aspirant contemplates the nature and attributes of God. In the same way, the phase originating in the state of "dreamless sleep" coincides with the Sufi *al-Ma'rīfat* (Knowledge or Gnosis), and the final immersion of the soul in the All in which the process culminates is identified with *al-Haqīqat* (the Truth) (cf. 4: 50-144).

In practice, the four stages (see Verses 152-59, quoted in Chapter VII, p. 98) tend to resolve themselves into three, ■ at each stage "remembrance" lifts the soul to a plane a degree higher than that in which it normally moves. Virtually, worship is regarded as "outward", "inward", and "transcendental".

All practice remembrance of God with the body; only one in many remembers Him with the spirit<sup>1</sup>.

When, beyond the worship of the spirit, there is complete immersion in Him, that (says Dadu) is the true discernment. (4: 152.)

The main interest of this and similar passages is again in the interpretation put upon the terms employed, and especially upon those describing the goal of the soul's quest. The state of "nothingness" to which Dadu aspires, as we have already seen, actually bears little resemblance either to the "Void" of the Vedānta, or the "Aloneness" of the Sāṃkhya. It is an exalted

<sup>1</sup> The "spirit" is here the inner ■ psychic man. Dadu is constantly passing over into the simpler Muslim psychology.



sense of oneness with the Eternal Being to whom the soul of man owes its existence, and in fellowship with whom is its true life. To be immersed in God is to forget oneself in lowly adoration and unquestioning obedience. To behold with "Brahma-sight" is in effect to see men as God sees them, and to love them as God loves them.

The Guru has made plain to the disciple the meaning of the four states.

Blessed is he who walks in the way of the Creator. (4: 144.)

He (the saint) is like Rama: this is to be 'Nothing'.  
The whole world passes away; the saint is immortal.

If any serve Rama, he becomes as Rama;  
He bears witness, as did Namdev and Kabir. (26: 5-6.)

The saint is he who bears enmity to no living creature.  
There is but one Spirit; he has no enemy. (29: 4.)

In thy speaking and hearing, take the Name of Rama; in thy giving  
and taking, Rama;  
In thy eating and drinking, Rama. In the place of the Spirit is rest. (2: 75.)

As an aid to the remembrance of God Dadu encourages "reflection",<sup>1</sup> an exercise which (it will be noted) involves the use of the critical faculties.

First reflect, and then go forward.  
Behold the nature of the beginning and the end before embarking on  
any enterprise.

First reflect, then travel in company;  
Behold the nature of the beginning and the end before joining hands  
with any.

The wise man first thinks, then acts: the fool acts first, then thinks.  
He who acts without thinking is put to shame: he who thinks and  
then acts is honoured.

Let the thought that arises last be the first spoken.  
Then will the mind be at peace and never have cause to grieve.

(18: 44, 45, 48, 49.)

<sup>1</sup> Bichār.

He enjoins also ■ form of 'secret meditation' which strongly recalls the "silent remembrance" (dhikr khafī) of the Sufis. The couplet

What wilt thou show by continual speaking? The Lord knows all.  
What wouldst thou declare? Let the wise man understand.

(5: 5.)

is reminiscent of the "God hears", "God sees", spoken with closed eyes and lips by the Sufi "with the tongue of the heart".

Let what springs up in the heart remain within the heart.

Keep it in thy heart, and declare it not abroad.

Continuing in thoughtful devotion, meditate upon it;

Then, eat as thou wilt, thou wilt not suffer from surfeit.

The true servant is he who quietly ponders all that springs up in the heart;

He tells it not to others, but cherishes it within.

The true servant is he who quietly ponders all that the Invisible reveals;

He preserves whatsoever he has found of the treasure of Rama. "

(5: 5a, 6, 8, 10.)

To talk glibly of the things of the spirit is to lose what one has found:

How shall he describe the peace he has found, where is the Self alone?

(5: 11.)

Least of all does the saint allow himself to speak unkindly of others, for this is to break the very silence of God.

One thing Hari ever forgets to utter: no man knows it.

He brings not to remembrance our shortcomings, though—whether we know them or not—He knows all.

(5: 30.)

Such times of quiet reflection and meditation alternate with periods of profound unrest, when the soul is conscious only of its separation from God, and cries out in pain for the vision of His face.

Sitting close at hand He hears all, but answers me not.

Dadu casts himself on Thee. Take away my life.

I behold all happy: none is in distress.  
 Sore distressed is Thy servant Dadu, because I see Thee not face to face.  
 None in all the world is in such deep distress as I;  
 I weep floods of tears in my longing to meet the Beloved.  
 I find Him not, neither can I find peace without Him. Say, how can I continue to live?  
 He that wounded me, the same alone can heal me.  
 Sighing for the vision the lonely one lives apart;  
 Enduring the pangs of separation, Dadu awaits the coming of Hari.  
 He who ardently yearns for the meeting, like a fish taken out of the water,  
 The same beholds the vision. The spirit is united to Him.  
 This lonely one, separated from Rama, yet finds Him not.  
 Dadu writhes like a fish, till Thou hast mercy upon Him.

(3: 10-11, 14-18.)

But such moods alternate also with exalted hours when the vision of God breaks upon the soul in dazzling splendour. Many of the hymns speak of the rapture of that vision, but "as well might a deaf-mute try to describe the taste of sugar as the saint to relate what he had seen and heard".

On the shores of that lake<sup>1</sup> the swans pick up pearls.  
 They drink of the fountains of water; they hear the word: "He is the Swan."<sup>2</sup>

On the shores of that lake the heart is fixed on the Lotus Feet;  
 There have I found the Beloved, the Eternal Niranjana.  
 In the free lake of the spirit the swans frolic;  
 They gather from the ocean of delight heart-ravishing pearls.  
 The lake of Hari is full to abundance: all may drink to their heart's content;  
 The moment one drinks of its waters, his thirst is quenched and the soul is at peace.  
 The Void is the lake, the swan the heart, the pearls the Infinite Self;  
 By gathering the pearls in their beaks the saints live.  
 The Void is the lake, the heart the fish, the water the God Niranjana;  
 Delight thyself with the nectar of Him who is the Invisible, the Unsearchable.

<sup>1</sup> Free detachment, the final stage of the mystic's progress.

<sup>2</sup> Soul, or Spirit.

The Void is the lake, the heart the bee, the lotus there is the Doer;  
Inhalc its fragrance, face to face with the Creator.

The Void is the lake of free detachment; there is the heart that has  
died and lives again;

Within, it gathers the jewels of Rama.

The Indivisible is the Lake, the Unfathomable the water: the swan  
bathes in the waters;

It has found the abode of the Self, which is void of fear; now it flies  
not away elsewhere.

Both disport themselves in the ocean of love;

The spirit and the Supreme Spirit are one: they hold unbroken  
communion.

Nothingness is the ocean, within it is the Jewel.

Plunge into the Self and behold Him.

(4: 57, 61-62, 64-67, 69-71.)

On every hand are the lamps of His glory, burning without wick,  
without oil;

In every direction behold the sun, a wondrous spectacle.

A crore of suns are shining on every hair;

The splendour of the Lord of the world is boundless.

As there is one sun in the heavens, so does He fill all.

Infinite is the glory of the great light of Allah.

I have beheld the sun, where was no sun; the moon, where was none;  
I have seen the glittering of the stars, where they were not. Great is  
my joy.

I have seen rain where was no cloud, I have heard the thunder where  
was no sound,

I have seen the flash where was no lightning. My bliss is supreme.

The light flashes forth, the treasury of glory is revealed.

Nectar rains down; I drink of the juice of the immortal heavenly  
tree.

(4: 87-92.)

In the illumined heart of the spirit, there is the Creator in His  
fulness;

There is the great light of Allah: His servant is before Him.

In the illumined heart of the spirit, there have I beheld the Doer;

There is the ceaseless play of all the suns.

In the illumined heart of the spirit, there has Niranjana His  
dwelling;

There Thy worshipper, at one step, beholds the treasury of glory.



In the body are two hearts, one of earth, and one of light;  
The heart of earth comprehends nothing: within the illumined heart  
is the Divine Presence.  
(4: 223-25, 227.)

All the twelve months rains down the pure water of light.  
Intoxicated with this nectar, the soul is aflame with the thirst of love.  
It drinks the nectar at every pore, so many mouths has it;  
He who is athirst with love can in no other way be satisfied.  
I drain the sweet nectar of Rama at ■ single draught;  
Not a drop remains: my whole heart is saturated with it.  
(4: 326-27, 332.)

But perhaps even more characteristic than these ecstatic moods, granted to "some rare saint", is the calm, steady faith that finds utterance in so many of the poems: the quiet assurance of one who has faced the storms and trials of life in a strength beyond his own and learned that in darkness and in sunshine, God can be trusted to the uttermost.

All, all is sweet to my taste, though He give it mixed with poison;  
Dadu calls it not bitter: he accepts it ■ ambrosia.

Adversity is good, if it be borne in the Name of Hari: affliction puts  
the body to the proof.

Without Rama, what avail wealth and comfort?

Without the one thing, faith, the soul is disquieted;  
Even in the presence of the treasure, the priceless wishing-stone,  
thou wilt else find sorrow.

The soul without faith is fickle, and finds no resting-place;  
It is fixed on nothing sure, but is concerned with other things.

What was to be, is. Be not over-eager for heaven,  
Nor be afraid of hell. What is appointed will come to pass.

What was to be, is; seek not joy or sorrow;  
When we ask for joy, sorrow may come. But forget not the face of  
the Beloved.

What was to be, is. That which the Beloved brings to pass  
Cannot be hastened or retarded by a moment. Let the soul rest  
assured of this.

What was to be is. Nothing else can be.

We receive what we are appointed to receive, and naught besides.

As He has appointed, so shall it be. Why take the burden on thyself?  
Lay it upon the Master, and behold what He shall do.

Deal with me, O Lord, ■ Thou seest good: I leave all to 'Thee;  
I behold no other: I turn not aside elsewhere.

Do just as 'Thou wilt: with this I am well content;  
Dadu's heart is knit to the truth, though day be turned to night.  
He that goes not about to speak ill of what the Doer has appointed,  
The same is the true worshipper and saint: he rests in the good  
pleasure of Rama.

"What the Doer has appointed, that know me to be."  
If thou art a wise and discerning disciple, let this be the proof of it.

(19: 39-51.)

But, even when the saint is living most near to God, his victory over self and the world is not to be presumed upon. "This heart is a frog." After appearing to be dead for an age, it suddenly springs to life again "like a ghost at the burning-ground" (10: 97-100). Casting off the "grosser illusion", men lay hold on the "more subtle" (18: 18). They begin to glory even in their spiritual attainments. Self begins to take pride in its victory over self.

We have smitten our enemy and died, but if he is not forgotten,  
The thorn will still remain. Understand this, and ponder it in thy  
heart.

(23: 14.)

Only in utter forgetfulness of self is salvation to be found:  
Not we the Doers: the Doer is another.  
The Doer will bring all to pass. Take not upon thyself the part of  
doer.

(19: 52.)

Nothing have I done, or can do; nor am I worthy to do anything.  
As Hari pleases, so He does. Yet all say: "Dadu, Dadu."

(21: 22.)

Render thy good deeds and service of others to Him to whom they  
are due;

Says Dadu: the true servant is he who takes not the burden on  
himself.

Direct thine acts of service to the supreme end;  
Says Dadu: the true servant is he who performs them to the un-  
imaged Niranjana.

Worship and good deeds count for nothing when "I and mine" are  
in the heart;  
Says Dadu: When they are mixed with self, the Master acknowledges  
them not.

(15: 55-57.)

Great emphasis is laid by Dadu, as by other *bhakti* writers, on the fellowship of the saints, as an aid to the spiritual life. As each joins himself to his own company, so the devout worshipper will seek the fellowship of kindred souls, and especially of those more advanced in the spiritual life than himself, knowing that "where the saint is, there is also Rama" (4: 181).

If thou dost truly yearn to meet with Rama,  
Then seek the company of the saints, for Rama is with them.

(15: 115.)

Through fellowship with Hari thou meetest the saints;  
Through fellowship with the saints thou meetest Hari.

(4: 182.)

Depart not from that man in whom the glory of Rama is revealed;  
Forsaking self, keep him ever before thine eyes.

(15: 84.)

God is the Unimaged, to be worshipped with mind and spirit. If one would behold His form, He is visibly present in the saint. All such should be held in reverence, for in them Rama has His dwelling (15: 2-4). There are two priceless jewels in the world, God and His saint (15: 60). The body of the saint is as a lamp shining with the light of God. Wherever it shines, in the home or in the forest, men circle round it like moths. It cannot be hidden (15: 79-83). To meet the saint is to meet with God, the source of all peace and joy (15: 22). Through fellowship, love and devotion are quickened (15: 13-22). The soul is kindled by the story of Hari's love, and the singing of His praise (15: 24-29). The saint wounds the heart by declaring the Word of the Satguru, so that it cries out: "O my Lord, of Thy mercy let me know the pain of separation from Thee" (15: 24-29). The saint brings news of the far country from which he has come, and distributes the gifts he bears with him (15: 98-101). Men are dead: they are as parched fields, till the saint waters them with the heavenly nectar (15: 103-7).

The saint in the world is ■ ■ boat on the sea of life;  
 How many have found salvation by travelling in his company!  
 The saint in the world is ■ the fragrance of the cool sandal tree;  
 How many have found salvation by seeking his presence!  
 The saint in the world is ■ a priceless diamond;  
 How many have found salvation by joining his fellowship!  
 The saint in the world sings the praises of the stone that transforms  
 all into gold;  
 How many have found salvation through its touch!  
 All the trees and plants of the forest, if they be near to the sandal  
 tree,  
 It makes fragrant by imparting its own sweet odour.  
 Where were the castor-oil plant and the sugar cane, there the sandal  
 tree springs up;  
 It has transformed them into sandal; none speaks any longer of cane.  
 The saint is the river, communion with Rama the water: there do  
 thou cleanse thy body;  
 Through the fellowship of the saint thou wilt become pure:  
 defilement will pass away.

(15: 5-11.)

That union with the Self for the sake of which the sages have died,  
 and gods and men have agonised,  
 The same is found with ease through fellowship with the saint.  
 Without fellowship it cannot be attained, exert oneself as one may;  
 Without the saint the Satguru can never be found.

(15: 34-35.)

To the true saint

Sun and moon do homage, taking the Name of Allah;  
 Heaven and earth bow down at his feet.  
 To that worshipper who is utterly devoted to Rama I dedicate  
 myself;  
 I do homage to him who holds fast to the Name of Hari.

(15: 45-46.)

#### THE ETHICAL TEACHING OF DADU

Frequent reference has been made in the preceding study to  
 the strong ethical note in Dadu's teaching. It is a noteworthy  
 fact that, for all his "visions and revelations", Dadu's feet never  
 quite leave the solid earth on which man's life has to be lived.



His ideal of sainthood—much as his language may at times appear to suggest it—is not that of complete withdrawal from contact with the world around him.<sup>1</sup> Life is lived in relationships. Character is revealed in a man's dealings with his fellow-men. The social aspect of his message, and its bearing on daily conduct, is never forgotten by Dadu.

Life in this world is good, while Rama dwells in the heart.  
The life lived without Rama is profitless.

(3: 33.)

There is no reproach in following an occupation, if one knows how  
to do it aright;  
There is joy in work, if it be with the Lord.

(19: 10.)

Consider calmly the hire of (i.e. what is due to) the body.  
Put from thee all that would separate thee from Hari.

(19: 28.)

This is entirely in harmony with what we know of Dadu's own practice, and with the mode of life he enjoined on his disciples.

Let us now glance at some of the main characteristics of the true servant of God, as depicted in the *Bani*. Great emphasis is laid on the necessity of distinguishing the false saint from the true. The supreme test is that of life and character. The tree is known by its fruits.

Whether he be a *shākta*<sup>2</sup> or a *bhakta*,<sup>3</sup> if he drinks the poison of sensual  
delights,  
Thither, O Rama, Thy servant goes not even in his dreams.

(12: 67.)

In the assembly of the devout, good counsels arise;  
When thou seatest thyself in the company of the *shākta*, wisdom  
departs.

(15: 70.)

<sup>1</sup> "Complete 'surrender to God' in a trance, and complete surrender of the will in the affairs of daily life, are, as a matter of fact, very different things. . . . Incredible as it may seem, this confusion of a fully conscious, unselfishly active, rational person, with the condition of someone entranced, i.e. deprived of his mental and bodily powers, runs through the writings of the great mystics." Leuba, *Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, pp. 173, 175.

<sup>2</sup> The worshipper of *shakti*, creative energy. The reference is to the obscene orgies associated especially with "Left-Hand" Shāktism, resembling those of the ancient Astarte cults.

<sup>3</sup> Follower of the way of *bhakti*.

As God dwells within, and worship is directed towards Him, the true saint has no need to assume the outward garb of the professional "holy man".

The earthen pot fresh from the kiln has many designs upon it;  
But of what use is it till there be something inside? So with men's  
varied garbs.

When the pot is filled with something of value, then it sells at a good  
price;

The empty vessel is sold for a cowrie.

Between the saint and the actor there is the difference of heaven and  
earth;

The saint *delights* in Rama: the actor's hope is in the world.

All the world are actors; rarely is the saint found,

Even as the sandal tree is not planted at large throughout the forest.

The Lord is the Lord of that man who is truly His;

Says Dadu: All else is vain; not by the garments he wears will any  
find Him.

(14: 5, 7, 14, 15, 20.)

The saint must be truly devout, living in daily fellowship with God, "dyed with His colour" (15: 31, 47-49). He must be truly humble, giving God the praise that is His due, and not "taking the burden upon himself" (15: 55). He must be pure. Only when the mirror is bright can the reflection be seen clearly in it. "What avails our meditation, if the heart is not pure?" (10: 87). He must be truly disinterested, thinking not of himself, but of others. God ever seeks men's good. Sun and moon, fire, air and water, night and day, food and shelter, all minister to the need of others. Even so does the true servant of God (15: 50-54). Like his Master, the servant of God is patient and forgiving. God does not set a watch on men's faults, and call them to remembrance (5: 30). He bears with their shortcomings, that His saints may learn to do likewise (5: 31).

As God is true, so must His servant be true, in thought, word and deed. "Truth is dear to the Lord. The true delights in truth. True is the Creator" (*Hymn* 192, Refrain). The saint is ready to die for the truth. "Only he who is prepared to die will take the name of Rama" (23: 2). As God, the Eternal Spirit, is One, and dwells in every heart, so will His true servant look

upon all men, of whatsoever race or caste or creed, with equal eye.

I regard not Hindu and Turk as two. There is one Lord over all: I behold no other.

(*Hymn 396, Refrain.*)

When one has lost what was one's own and abandoned all pride of birth,  
When vainglory has dropped away, then is one face to face with the Creator.

(23: 35.)

In a word, the calling of the servant of God in the world is to reflect in his daily walk and conversation the image of the Master he serves. By living near to God he becomes like God (6: 8).

The image of the Master is in all His servants;  
The saint, His servant, is not other than Himself.

(15: 91.)

Here, it will be noted, is something more than a mere code of ethics. The moral life is rooted and grounded in Him whose throne is truth, and whose nature is love.

But it is perhaps in Dadu's conception of sin, as revealed in such passages as we have quoted from the chapter entitled "Supplication", and in many of the justly-called "penitential hymns", that the ethical note is heard most distinctly. Here, as has already been pointed out, sin is presented, not simply as weakness, folly, or ignorance, but as moral culpability. It is the wilful transgression of God's commandments; it is the setting at defiance of His holy and blessed will. It is the base ingratitude of one who receives all, and offers nothing. It is the surrender to vulgar passions and mean ambitions of a soul created for fellowship with the divine Creator.

Nought but evil have I wrought, more than tongue can tell.  
My Lord is pure. Cast not the blame on Him.

I have neglected God's service: a sinful servant am I;  
There is no other so foul as I am.

I offend in every act, I fail in every duty,  
I sin against Thee every moment. Pardon my transgressions.

Since I came into the world, from first to last, no good thing have I done;

I have yielded my heart to the glamour of illusion, to pride and sensual pleasures.

My heart is soiled within, it is full of clamant desires;

Reveal and take them wholly away. This is the prayer of Dadu.

(34: 3-5, 10, 14.)

It should already have become clear that, whatever the Vedantist philosopher may make of it, Dadu's conception of *ahamkāra* (the egoistic principle, the affirmation: "I am") as the root-principle of sin is a profoundly moral one. It is, as we have repeatedly said, the self-assertion of the human will in opposition to the divine. It is the equivalent of the "Yea, hath God said?" of early Hebrew story (Gen. 3: 1).

With what face shall the soul present itself before Thee against whom it has offended?

I depart having spent my precious life without profit.

I have done all for the gratification of the senses, I have given my heart whatsoever it asked.

Nothing have I done for that end for which Thou didst create the world,

(10: 30, 33.)

We have travelled a long way from the thought of the Unknowable God with which our study of Dadu's teaching began. The sense of the impenetrable mystery of God's being is indeed always present. He immeasurably transcends the highest thoughts that man can form of Him. Yet He has in very truth revealed Himself. He has made known His will to His servants. In harmony with His will is to be found the secret of that living communion with God which alone makes right living possible, and is the fulfilment of man's true destiny.



## Chapter Nine

### SOME DISCIPLES OF DADU

DADU is popularly believed to have left 152 disciples, of whom fifty-two founded *Dādū-dwāras*, or "Doors of Dadu", and adopted successors.<sup>1</sup> That a considerable number of Dadu's followers did found settlements (*thāmbha*) still known by their names is beyond doubt, but the tradition of the "Fifty-Two" is in all likelihood a reading back into the early history of the more formal organisation of a later period.<sup>2</sup>

To Garib Das, as Dadu's elder son, it fell to perform the last offices of respect for his dead father. The reverence and affection in which he was generally held also marked him out as Dadu's successor on the *gaddi*, or seat of authority. The idea of a new sect or order, indeed, with its distinctive regulations and modes of worship, took shape only gradually. But we have the evidence both of Jan Gopal and of Rajjab Das that Garib Das actually was appointed, by general consent, spiritual head of the *Dwara* at Naraina. The task to which he was called may well have been one for which he had no special aptitude. At all events, it is known that he soon resigned office, and the control of the *Dwara* passed into other hands. His life was spent in prayer and song and meditation. His saintly character made a deep impression on the minds of his fellow disciples and doubtless did much to keep the better elements in the movement faithful to the spirit of its departed leader up to the time of his death in A.D. 1636. Only a few doubtful fragments of his songs survive. The *Rosary of Saints*<sup>3</sup> of Rāgho (Rāghava) Das records a visit paid to Garib Das by the Emperor Jahangir, soon after his accession, on the course of a journey to Ajmer. True to his character, Garib Das refused the proffered gifts of the Emperor, but a modest *bārāhdarī*, or pillared courtyard, built by Jahangir's orders, and bearing on one of its walls a (now unfortunately

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 4, Art. "Dadu."

<sup>2</sup> The names of the Fifty-Two, and the settlements with which they are associated, are given in Appendix A.

<sup>3</sup> *Bhaktamāla*.

almost undecipherable) Persian inscription, is still shown at the *Dwara*.

Reference has been made to a group of disciples to whose labours we owe the preservation of Dadu's poems. Among these Tilā, a Jat by caste, a favourite disciple, and Mohan Daftārī (the "Scribe") hold an honoured place. Tilā is said to have been a poet in his own right, but none of his verses have survived. As will be seen in a later chapter, quite a number of little-known disciples gained a modest reputation as writers of devotional verse.

Conspicuous among the editors of Dadu's works was Rajjab Das. Rajjab (Rajab Ali Khan), though of Hindu descent, was, like Dadu, by birth a Musalman. The son of a "Paṭhān", a subordinate officer in the army of Raja Bhagwan Das and later of Raja Man Singh, Rajjab was born at Sanganer, about fourteen miles south of Amber. In his youth he was trained after the fashion of his day in manly exercises and in the use of arms. Of deeply religious nature, his own interests lay chiefly in the direction of study and meditation. He is described as tall, muscular, and exceedingly handsome. Tradition tells of his first meeting with Dadu at Amber, and of his dramatic renunciation of the world on the very eve of his expected marriage. When Rajjab declared his intention of exchanging his wedding garments for the sober garb of the religious ascetic, Dadu bade him retain his bridegroom's attire: a fitting symbol of the new joy into which he had entered. It is said that to the end of his days Rajjab continued to wear the costume of a bridegroom, in token of his call.

The incident does not occur in Jan Gopal's narrative, nor is there any allusion to it in Rajjab's own poems. In Jan Gopal's account of a visit paid by Dadu to Rajjab, presumably at Sanganer, many years later, it is indeed assumed that Rajjab is already a disciple, but no indication is given of the circumstances of their first meeting. The fact that Rajjab had several disciples of his own whom he was eager to introduce to Dadu suggests that, even before that event, he may have possessed a certain standing as a religious teacher. In later years he came to hold a position of influence and authority second only to that of Dadu himself. But his attitude was ever that of a loyal and

devoted disciple. Much of his time was spent in Dadu's company, and he was among the disciples present at Naraina at the time of their Master's death in 1603. Rajjab was overwhelmed with grief. Several deeply moving poems commemorating the death of his beloved teacher and friend are preserved in his own *Bani*. "Rajjab's heart is sore at the passing of Dadu."<sup>1</sup> For a time he seems to have found it hard to acknowledge any successor. In the company of Pandit Jag Jiwan of Tahalri and the youthful Sundar Das, he went off to Kashi (Benares), and did not return for about three years. In the collection of poems from which we have just quoted, he has some verses in which Garib Das is warmly commended as a worthy occupant of the "cushion" left vacant by his father's death. But Rajjab's real interest was in the collection and preservation of Dadu's poems. The creation of a "Dadu Panth" doubtless made as little appeal to him as it did to Dadu himself. Rajjab was at the height of his powers at the time of Dadu's death, and much of his best work, including many of his finest tributes to Dadu's teaching and influence, was written in later years. He died at Sanganer at a very advanced age.<sup>2</sup> A weather-worn copy of Rajjab's works, together with some relics, may still be seen in a neglected shrine, once his home, in Sanganer. A small platform in the village of Tantoli has a replica of his footprints. Rajjab had ten or twelve personal disciples, and through them his memory is preserved in many villages in Jaipur, Tonk, Jodhpur, and Udaipur. Several of his fellow disciples have composed verses in his honour. Rajjab's present-day followers are known as "Rajjab Panthi" or "Rajjabāwat".<sup>3</sup>

Sundar Das the Younger—so called to distinguish him from another disciple of the same name—has been styled "the last and youngest, in fame the greatest, of the disciples of Dadu". Though only a child of eight at the time of Dadu's death, he has some claim to be regarded as belonging to the original

<sup>1</sup> *Bhent ke Sawaiye*.

<sup>2</sup> Though hardly at the age of 122, as stated by his biographers. There is apparently some confusion between the supposed date of Rajjab's death (1689) and that of Sundar Das. The latter reached Sanganer in that year, to discover that Rajjab was no longer alive. But Rajjab may well have died many years before.

<sup>3</sup> Many of the facts above recorded are taken from two articles on "Mahatma Rajjabji" contributed by Purohit Hari Narayan, B.A., to the Hindi quarterly, *Rajasthan* (1936).



circle of Dadu's followers. Born at Dausa in A.D. 1596, he was reared from childhood in the Dadu tradition, and never wavered in his loyalty to his Guru. His father was Paramananda, a Khandelwal Mahajan<sup>1</sup> of the Busar clan. His meeting with Dadu in early childhood has already been described. He is believed to have been present at Naraina in the closing days of Dadu's life. For a short time he returned to his home in Sanganer, then went to live, first at Didwana (in Marwar), then at Fatehpur (in Shaikhawati) with Dadu's disciple Prag (Prayag) Das. Through the influence of another disciple, Jag Jiwan, who lived at Tahalri in the hilly country not far from his old home, he became interested in philosophy and formed the desire to study at Benares. In 1606 he accompanied Jag Jiwan to Kashi (Benares) and remained there, with frequent visits home, till 1625. At Kashi he studied grammar and poetry, and acquired that scholarly knowledge of Hindu philosophy which he turned to such good account in later years. He was a diligent student of Yoga, but his love of poetry remained and increased. At Kashi he made the acquaintance of several well-known poets of his day. In 1625 he returned to Fatehpur, the home of Prag Das. There he continued his practice of Yoga, and studied and taught the *Bani* of Dadu. The then Nawab of Fatehpur was a descendant of the famous Qayām Khān, a Chauhān Rajput who had become a convert to Islam in the fourteenth century. A lover of the vernacular tongue and himself a poet, he became the intimate friend of Sundar Das. The local Mahajans built a house for the poet's use, provided with an underground chamber, known as the *gufa* or cave, to which he was wont to retire to meditate.

Sundar Das led a wandering life, and it was during his journeyings that most of his literary works were composed. He travelled over a large part of Northern India, as well as into Gujerat, Kathiawar, the Panjab, and the Deccan. He knew Gujerati well, and has also composed some Panjabi verses. He was specially attached to Kursānā, in Marwar, where it is believed the greater part of his best-known work—the *Sawaiye*—was written. He diligently visited all the places specially associated with the name of Dadu, and made the acquaintance of

<sup>1</sup> *Banya*, member of a branch of the mercantile caste.



his fellow disciples. Among his dearest friends was Rajjab. On the death of Prag Das in 1631 Sundar Das left Fatehpur. He lived now at Kursana, now at Morra, sometimes at Amber, and sometimes with Rajjab at Sanganer. All this time he continued writing at intervals. Shortly before his death, his poems were carefully collected and arranged by himself. The year 1687 was spent mostly in Fatehpur. Finally, enfeebled with age, he set out for Sanganer, where he learned of the death of his old friend, Rajjab. He died at Sanganer in 1689. His tomb may still be seen there, ■ small circular shrine, with a white stone bearing the "feet" of Sundar Das, and those of his youngest disciple, Narayan Das. Narayan Das succeeded his master at Fatehpur, which is known as the *thambha* of Sundar Das. Other disciples founded settlements elsewhere. Copies of his writings are preserved at the various *thambhas*. His sandals, robe, and cap are shown at Fatehpur. His bed is kept as a relic at Churu (Bikanir), not far from Jhunju in Shaikhawati. At Lahore, a handsome cenotaph has been erected to his memory.<sup>1</sup>

Of Sundar Das the Elder, to whom the Dadupanthi Nagas trace their origin, nothing is certainly known. The legend is that a Rajput prince of the house of Bikanir was on service with the imperial forces at Kabul when a false rumour of his death reached his home. His wife, believing herself to be a widow, committed herself to the flames in accordance with the Hindu rite of *sati*. Recovering from his wounds and learning of this tragedy, the brave Rajput had no heart to return to Bikanir. He resolved to forsake the world and adopt the life of a religious ascetic. Laying his weapons at Dadu's feet, he declared his resolve to become a disciple, but Dadu bade him take up his arms again and wear them. Religion consisted not in forsaking one's calling, but in the complete surrender of the heart to God.

The story, reminiscent of that of Rajjab Das, is of comparatively late origin. There is no mention of Sundar Das in Jan Gopal's *Life Story of Dadu*. He makes his first appearance in Raghava's *Rosary of Saints* written fully a century later. The story is clearly designed to explain the later development of ■

<sup>1</sup> For the above particulars I am mainly indebted to Purohit Hari Narayan's account of the life of Sundar Das in Vol. I of his *Sundar-Granthāvalī* (Complete Works of Sundar Das).

section of the Panth into a body of armed ascetics. The Rajput warrior who is instructed by Dadu to retain his weapons formed a useful connecting link with the fighting Naga who was just beginning to come into prominence in Raghava's day. Sundar Das, with his fellow disciple, Prahlaḍ Das, is traditionally associated with the *thambha* of Ghatra, now in Alwar State. We know that the Ghatra settlement was early identified with the militant movement, of which a short account is given in a later chapter. But in the opening decades of the eighteenth century sporadic outbreaks were of frequent occurrence, and there is no positive evidence that the Dadu Panthis of Ghatra were the first to resort to arms.

Mention should also be made of Baṇwārī (Bihārī) Das, the reputed founder of an influential branch of the Panth who became known as Uttarādhās, or Northerners. The name is primarily geographical, and was given to those early disciples who as physicians, agriculturalists, and men of business, carried the cult of Dadu across the northern borders of Rajputana into the districts of Hissar and Rohtak. With Banwari Das, who founded a settlement at Ratiya in Hissar, were associated his fellow disciples, Hari Das of Ranila, some twelve miles distant, and Sadhu Ram of Mandota, near Delhi. Banwari Das is said to have had twelve disciples. Through these and their spiritual descendants the movement spread, not only into the Panjab, but into several of the surrounding Indian states, and as far south as Sindh, Gujerat, and Central India. Originally applied to the disciples of Banwari Das and his two associates, the term *uttaradha* has now largely lost its original meaning, and come to represent a more or less well-defined group scattered over a very wide area, mostly engaged in business and agriculture and in the practice of *ayurvedic* medicine.

## Chapter Ten

### EARLY HISTORY: THE RISE OF THE DADU PANTH

IN the absence of written contemporary records, it is possible to give only a fragmentary account of the growth of the Dadu cult during the first century of its history. Throughout this period (1603-93) the control of the Naraina *Dwara* remained almost entirely in the hands of Dadu's lineal descendants. With the exception of Miskin Das, his second son, all Dadu's family remained unmarried. Thus the succession passed through the line of Miskin Das, and the occupants of the Naraina *gaddi* are accordingly known as *Miskindāsot*, heirs of Miskin Das.

The formal tradition is that the seat of authority was occupied successively by Garib Das, by his brother Miskin, and, finally, by Miskin's eldest son, Faqir Das. There is a marked reticence in the early references to Miskin Das. In Raghava's *Rosary of Saints* (1713), Miskin is included in the list of the "fifty-two" disciples, but is not otherwise mentioned except as the father of Faqir Das. In a less-known and probably earlier collection of miscellaneous poems<sup>1</sup> by the same author there is a fuller account of Dadu's family. Garib Das is there said to have been succeeded by the "two sisters"—generally understood to be Dadu's daughters—followed by Faqir Das. Mention is also made of Miskin's three sons, Faqir Das, Atit Das, and Chaitan Das, and of ■ daughter, Rama Bai. Hawwa Bai, who is frequently spoken of, is generally regarded as the sister of Garib and Miskin, but some early writers represent her as Dadu's sister. From the laudatory terms in which "Aunt Hawwa" (father's sister) is referred to by Raghava and others, it is clear that this lady (whether the aunt of Garib or of Faqir) exercised considerable influence in the counsels of the *Dwara*.

Oral tradition tells of an early rupture among Dadu's followers, of which there is some confirmatory evidence. The story is widely current that, on Garib Das's retirement, Miskin

<sup>1</sup> *Phutkar Sawaiye*.



Das was passed over, and one Keval Ram, whom Garib Das had nominated ■ his successor, acted for a time as spiritual head of the order. Miskin Das had, however, a sufficiently strong body of supporters to secure his own appointment. Keval Ram was removed and set up a "seat" of his own, thus becoming the founder of the *Garībdāsot* (heirs of Garib), representatives of which branch are still to be found in various places. It is further stated that Miskin was finally deposed in favour of a disciple, Chaitan Das,<sup>1</sup> but that Dhanni Bai, the wife of Miskin, jealous of the rights of her own family, succeeded (possibly after Miskin's death) in having Chaitan Das removed from office, and her own son, Faqir Das, installed in his place. Chaitan Das received as solatium the honorific title of "Mahant of the Palace", a dignity still enjoyed by his spiritual descendants.<sup>2</sup> On the death of Faqir Das, Dhanni Bai is popularly believed to have taken possession of the *gaddi*, but to have been soon displaced by the unanimous election in 1693 of Jait Ram, known as Jait Sahib, the virtual founder of the modern Dadu Panth.

One fact which clearly emerges from this rather confused story is that, during the first century of its existence, the new order was very loosely organised, and stood sorely in need of ■ capable, directing head. Neither Garib Das nor his successors had, it appears, the needed gift of leadership. Apart from a natural preference for a lineal descendant of Dadu, no regular system of election seems to have been in force. The rejection of Miskin Das may have been due in part to the fact of his being married, but it is much more likely that his character was felt to compare unfavourably with that of his brother Garib. In fact, the part played by Miskin Das and Dhanni Bai in the early days of the Panth would appear to have been as great an embarrassment to their contemporaries as it has proved to later chroniclers. It must have been with profound feelings of relief that loyal members of the Panth hailed the accession of Jait

<sup>1</sup> Not his ■ of that ■

■ The Palace Mahant has still certain ceremonial duties to perform in connection with the appointment of ■ new head of the *Dwara*. This functionary leads the new Mahant by the hand and formally seats him on the *gaddi*. One of his duties, on the occasion of the death of a Mahant, is to provide grain from his private resources for the whole *Dwara* on the day of the funeral.



Sahib, and the introduction of the new regulations he framed for the orderly conduct of its affairs.

It may be remembered that, in the modern versions of the *Life Story*, there is attributed to Dadu a prophecy that after the lapse of a century a great leader will arise to guide the Panth among the confusions of the time. The reference can only be to Jait Sahib (1693-1732), and is important as indicating the place he came to hold in the estimation of Dadu's followers.<sup>1</sup>

Of Jait Sahib's personal history very little is known. He is believed to have come from quite a humble home and to have risen through sheer force of character to the eminent position he occupied. Only a proved capacity for affairs, coupled with the general respect and confidence he inspired, could have led to his being chosen to guide the destinies of the Panth in the troubled days through which it was passing. To his practical genius is universally ascribed the organisation of the modern Panth.

Jait Sahib was succeeded by a weaker man, Kishan Dev (1732-53). The illustrious Sawai Jai Singh was then ruler of Amber. A royal decree requiring that the heads of certain religious orders should be married men aroused some consternation, and alarmed among others the Mahant of Naraina, who endeavoured to temporise. Finally, despairing of further resistance, Kishan Dev reluctantly allowed the arrangements for his marriage to go forward, but at the last moment, repenting of his decision, he fled, mounted on a bullock, it is said, at dead of night and sought refuge in the neighbouring kingdom of Marwar (Jodhpur). He set up his *gaddi* near Merta, where he remained till his death in 1753. Availing himself of the dissensions following upon the death of Sawai Madhu Singh (1767), Chain Sahib, a grand-disciple of Kishan Dev, returned to Naraina. The officiating Mahant surrendered his office and received in return the title, still held by his modern successors, of Mahant of the Cenotaphs.<sup>2</sup> Chain Sahib

<sup>1</sup> Incidentally, it also enables us to fix a date for the first important revision of the work of Jan Gopal.

<sup>2</sup> Erected in memory of the leading Mahants from the time of Jait Sahib onwards. This well-authenticated episode explaining the origin of the title "Mahant of the Cenotaphs" suggests that the explanation given of the earlier title "Mahant of the Palace" is also probably correct.

died in 1780. Meanwhile, throughout Jaipur and Marwar and far to the north the scattered members of the Panth were being gradually drawn into a life-and-death struggle before which these mild domestic happenings pale into insignificance.

More noteworthy, however, than any change of outward circumstance was the subtle change which had passed over the inner character of the movement in the century that had elapsed since Dadu's death. The fellowship which Dadu had gathered round him was of the most catholic character. It had no formal body of doctrine, no distinctive marks, no initiatory rites, no prescribed modes of worship. It was open to men and women of every caste and community, and every walk of life. Its bond of union was a common spirit of devotion, and, born of this, a very real sense of human brotherhood. The same spirit is evident in the writings of Dadu's early followers. They glory in their catholicity. Even the *Life Story of Dadu*, in its original form, is singularly free from sectarian bias. It is a sincere and honest effort to perpetuate the memory of a great saint and teacher.

In harmony with this ideal, the communal worship of the original body of disciples appears to have been of the simplest kind. It was probably little more than a continuation of the informal devotional gatherings to which they had been accustomed during Dadu's lifetime. The *Āratī* hymns, as they are called, of which a few examples have been given, in which the symbolism of the temple ritual is used to emphasise the inward and spiritual character of true worship, would be frequently recited, and passages from Dadu's poems, and from the works of Kabir and others, read and expounded.

But the need of more definite regulations than Dadu had bequeathed soon made itself felt. In another interpolated passage towards the end of Jan Gopal's *Life Story* we have an indication of the perplexity felt by his later followers owing to the absence of ■ clearly prescribed order of life and worship such as other religious bodies possessed. Dadu had taught ■ way which was that neither of the Hindu nor of the Muslim. What rule were they to follow? Dadu answers by assuring them of his continued presence with them in the coming days. The new element in their worship, then, was the sense of spiritual

communion with their departed Guru. The all but divine honours paid to Dadu in his later years provided the nucleus around which the worship of the new cult began to take shape. To this the editing of Dadu's "oracles" gave a powerful stimulus. The thought of the presence of their invisible Master found expression in reverent prostrations, and in the type of invocatory prayer we find in the works of Rajjab, Sundar Das, and others. The authentic voice of the Guru was heard in the passages now regularly recited from the *Bani*. The Book, symbol of the spoken Word, became for them, as for the Sikhs, an object of special reverence. In this way there gradually grew up a more or less stereotyped ritual centring in the worship of the *Bani*. For the Hindu worshipper, familiar with the temple service, it was but a short step from the formal recital of the *Āratī*, with its figurative allusions to the several implements of idol-worship, to the actual introduction of these as visible symbols of the heart-worship which Dadu enjoined. Through this channel, much that Dadu would have condemned as idolatrous began little by little to find its way back into the daily worship of the *Dwara*.

Another noteworthy feature of the years we have briefly passed in review was the gradual elimination of the Islamic element in the Dadu tradition, and the growing approximation of the Panth, in teaching as in practice, to the standpoint of orthodox Hinduism. For this many reasons can be assigned. Most important of all was the Ramananda tradition, and the many natural affinities of the Panth with the Hindu *bhakti* schools. Also, while the number of Dadu's Muslim followers was considerably larger than the existing records would indicate, by far the greater proportion of his adherents were Hindus. Among these were several Hindu scholars, such as Jag Jiwan and Prayag Das. Even Rajjab, the most famous of Dadu's Muslim disciples, was a Hindu by descent. No one did more to turn the thoughts of the Panth in the direction of Hindu philosophy than that most devoted of disciples, Sundar Das. When we remember the strong Vedantic strain in Dadu's own teaching, this fact is in no way surprising. It was altogether natural for these men to lay hold on those features of the *Bani* which were most congenial to their own mode of thinking, and



which they were thus most capable of appreciating. But the fact remains that the Hindu element in Dadu's thought has been so exclusively emphasised by the later Panth that the contribution of Islam to the enrichment of his message has been virtually ignored. Thus the whole trend, even in early days, was in the direction of a return to the fold of Hindu orthodoxy. The enrolment of Muslim adherents ceased with Dadu's death. Within a few generations, with one or two unavoidable exceptions, their very names had disappeared from the literature of the Panth. By the close of the century the theory of Dadu's brahman birth had not yet been fully elaborated, but his Muslim origin was already something to be glossed over or explained away.<sup>1</sup> The death of Faqir Das in 1693 severed the last link with the religion of Islam. With the election of Jait Sahib, the Dadu Panth became to all intent a new Hindu sect.

A further illustration of this process of re-absorption into Hinduism was the growing acceptance of celibacy as the rule of the new order. For this the way had been prepared by the marked austerity of Dadu's own outlook. Notwithstanding his pure ideals of fatherhood and motherhood, and his almost Semitic awe in presence of the mystery of birth, there is unquestionably a strong bias in Dadu's teaching in the direction of the forcible suppression of the natural instincts. While imposing no rule of celibacy on his followers, Dadu is insistent in his warnings regarding the perils of sex, and woman is apt to figure in his poems rather as the temptress who leads men astray than as a possible companion and helper in the spiritual life. The ascetic ideal was reinforced by the personal example of Garib Das and of his nephew, Faqir Das, as well as that of "Aunt Hawwa", the "two sisters", and Rama Bai. And the career of Miskin Das did little to foster the idea of the sanctity of marriage.

The statement of the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* that Dadu "neither enjoined nor forbade marriage" may be taken as reflecting the teaching and practice of the cult up to about the middle of the seventeenth century. Among certain groups of Dadu Panthis,

<sup>1</sup> It is tempting to find here an explanation of the transference of the scene of Dadu's childhood and youth from Rajputana to Gujerat, where his personal history was unknown.



as at Narnaul in Patiala State, there is a continuous tradition of marriage from the earliest days of the Panth, and these have always regarded themselves, not as "sevaks" (servants) or lay-adherents, but as "sadhus" or disciples in the fullest sense. Whatever his own chosen mode of life, it is difficult to imagine either the son or grandson of Dadu insisting on the vow of celibacy as a *sine qua non* of full discipleship. But the bent of the movement was all in that direction. It is not necessary to suppose that any new regulation was formulated by Jait Sahib on the subject. The tradition was already firmly established. In this, as in other respects, the Panth was coming to conform more and more to the usage of other religious orders. The accession of Jait Sahib, as the first of an unbroken succession of celibate Mahants outside of Dadu's own family, marks the final triumph of the Hindu ascetic ideal.

We may also note in passing a phenomenon to which allusion has already been made—namely, the growing sect-consciousness of the Panth. This may be seen even in a devotional work like Raghava's *Rosary of Saints*. Its aim is not primarily sectarian, yet there is a conscious effort to give to the Dadu Panth its rightful place alongside of the four great historic *Sampradayas*, or schools, of orthodox Vaishnavism.

The outward course of events, if it did not provoke, certainly did much to hasten the return of the Panth to the Hindu fold. The death of Faqir Das closed an epoch in the history of the movement. The event coincided closely with the death (A.D. 1707) of the Emperor Aurangzeb, in the closing years of whose reign signs had already begun to appear of that disintegration of the Moghul Empire which was soon to plunge the whole of Northern India into a state of indescribable disorder. The Hindu-Muslim *entente* of which the Emperor Akbar had dreamed, and which so many devout souls, both Hindu and Muslim, had eagerly sought to realise, was already a thing of the past. Muslim and Hindu were once more ranged in opposite camps. It had become a necessity of existence that the Dadu Panth should declare itself on one side or the other. For Dadu's followers the question was already decided, on grounds with which loyalty to the teaching and spirit of the *Bani* had little to do. The Bairāgis, as the armed Vaishnava ascetics were called,

were already in the field. It was in the character of Bairagis, heirs of the Ramananda tradition and doughty champions of the Hindu cause, that, not many years later, the armed disciples of Dadu threw themselves into the struggle. The rise of the Nāgā, or militant, branch of the Panth forms the subject of our next chapter.

## Chapter Eleven

### THE MILITANT MOVEMENT: THE RISE OF THE NAGAS

IN taking to the profession of arms, the Dadu Panthis were only following the lead of other religious orders of the period. They were in fact among the last to join the ranks of the armed ascetics. It would take us too far from our present subject to attempt to trace even in broad outline the train of events which led to this strange episode in the history of the Panth.<sup>1</sup>

It should be understood that, even in the heyday of its military power, the Panth never became a mere body of Nāgās, or professional fighters.<sup>2</sup> The Mahant of Naraina continued to preside, nominally at least, over the destinies of the Panth as a whole. It is in fact to the non-combatant element (designated as *Khālsā*, pure) that we owe practically all that survives of the original Dadu tradition. But for at least a century it is the Dadu Panthi warrior who occupies the foreground of the picture, and to whose activities must be attributed both the amazing growth of the Panth in numbers and material prosperity, and its no less marked spiritual decline.

All are agreed in ascribing to Jait Sahib the formal organisation of the Nagas. The carrying of arms was by this time a common practice among religious devotees. It was during the mahantship of Jait Sahib that the four leading Vaishnava sects known as Bairagīs had formed themselves into a powerful confederacy at the Galta, a famous place of pilgrimage situated in a steep ravine lying about halfway between Amber and the modern city of Jaipur. It is not at all unlikely that individuals and groups among the Dadu Panthis had already joined the

<sup>1</sup> For a brief account of this remarkable movement, see reprint of ■ article by the present writer on "Armed Religious Ascetics in Northern India" from the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester*, for April, 1940.

■ *Nāgā* (Sanskrit, *nagna*, naked) was the generic name for all classes of armed religious ascetics. These are to be distinguished from the Naga tribes of Assam, though the origin of the name is the same.

Bairagis (as we know many of them did later), and thus had their appetites whetted for war and plunder. Until the accession of Jait Sahib, there was little central control. It was, as we have seen, the need of a strong hand to give unity and direction to the life of the Panth that led to his election. The work of Jait Sahib was thus not so much to initiate the militant movement as rather to bring to heel those who were tempted to shake off the authority of their nominal head and embark on an independent career as active combatants. A fighting branch of the order was formally recognised, and an attempt made to bring a new element of order and discipline into its ranks.

This impression is borne out by the tradition that, when oppression and disorder were found calling for measures of defence, members of the Panth were required to report to the authorities on the occasion of the great annual festival at Naraina, when companies of armed men were allocated to the disturbed districts in the needed numbers. In this connection, it is interesting to learn from a contemporary document of a piece of land being gifted by Raja Sawai Jai Singh to the Dadu Panthis in 1718 at Chimanpura, near Chatsu, about thirty miles from the city of Jaipur. This might possibly be regarded simply as a religious endowment of the usual kind, but it is significant that only fifteen years later, in the year following the death of Jait Sahib, we find in another document (1733) the first mention—and in this same district of Chatsu—of the farming of taxes by Dadu's followers, an operation in which the Nagas were later to take an active part. It need hardly be said that the collection of revenue was then, and for many years to come, carried out by an armed force.

With the passing of Jait Sahib and the election of a less able successor, the centre of interest shifts from the official heads of the order at Naraina to a series of capable and energetic military leaders under whose fostering care the training of members of the Panth in the art of war, and the vigorous recruiting of potential warriors, proceeded apace. Some of these leaders are now little more than names, and are remembered chiefly as the traditional founders of the several septs or clans into which the fighting order came to be divided. Conspicuous among these Naga chiefs were Keval Das of Udchi and his



disciple, Hirday Ram. These are believed to have been connected with the *thāmbhā* of Sundar Das, the warrior saint of early history, and their exploits lent colour to the tradition associating the beginnings of the militant movement with Ghatra.

A powerful body of armed Bairagis was already firmly established at Jaipur, the new capital, under the patronage of Raja Sawai Jai Singh. The Dadu Panthis are said to have joined the Bairagis in several of their predatory excursions to Brindaban (Mathura) and elsewhere, and to have shared—and quarrelled over—the spoils of war. It was not till some time later that they were strong enough to maintain a military establishment of their own. Oral tradition tells of a terrible massacre of Dadu's followers in the reign of the ill-fated Raja Isri (Ishwari) Singh (1743–50) at Fateh Tiba, just outside the walls of Jaipur, on the occasion of a religious festival. Isri Singh was at war with his half-brother and claimant to the throne of Jaipur, Madhu Singh of Mewar (Udaipur). The city was attacked several times before its final capture by Madhu Singh in 1750. On the occasion of one of these assaults it is said that a large company of Dadu Panthis, who were having their food at Fateh Tiba, were surprised and practically annihilated.<sup>1</sup> If the story has—■ seems likely enough—some historical foundation, it is of interest chiefly as evidence of the existence at this time of a considerable body of armed Dadu Panthis. The victims are not stated to have been professional soldiers, but the enemy would hardly have spent his strength in the slaughter of ■ large company of harmless mendicants. Nor is it likely that these should choose as the scene of their celebrations a military camping ground—as the Fateh Tiba was—unless there already existed at least the nucleus of the military force afterwards established there.

In the year 1779 the Dadu Panthi Nagas at last emerge into the clear light of history, under the leadership of the renowned Santokh Das, who continued to hold office as Mahant, or “spiritual” head, of all the Nagas throughout the period of the later wars, and for some time after the British settlement in 1818. By way of prelude we have a glimpse (1776) of the future

<sup>1</sup> The story is that only eleven boys survived, and that these became the founders of the eleven *akhiras* or military centres of the Nagas!

Naga chief, with his Guru, Ram Krishan Das, as tax-farmers in the *pargana*<sup>1</sup> of Bhawani Shankarpura (close to the scene of the Fatch Tiba disaster), in consideration of cash advances to the State. Three years later, with dramatic suddenness, the curtain rises on the armed Naga host.

The occasion was an incursion into Jaipur territory of a punitive force sent by Mirza Najaf Khan, Naib Wazir at Delhi, in a final effort to establish Moghul authority. The costly wars of Madhu Singh, the encroachments of the Jats, the depredations of the Marathas, and the ceaseless demands for arrears of tribute from the imperial exchequer had brought the State to the verge of bankruptcy. In an encounter with the Jats twelve years before, Jaipur had lost the flower of its nobility. Shaikhawati, the northern district, was now overrun, and several of its chieftains carried off and held to ransom. At this point, Murtaza Ali Khan, one of Najaf Khan's generals, appeared with a formidable force on the Jaipur borders. A fierce battle ensued at Khatu, when the invaders were repulsed with heavy losses on both sides, and Murtaza Ali put to flight. In this, the first regular engagement in which they are known to have taken part, the Dadu Panthis displayed great valour, and many—with their leader, Mangal Das—were left dead upon the field. Though popularly associated with the settlement of Sundar Das at Ghatra, Mangal Das's antecedents are unknown. Some believe him to have been a wandering ascetic; others assert that he was a prosperous and influential member of the Panth residing at Dudu, nine miles north of Naraina, and half-way between Jaipur and Ajmer. Memorial stones erected in memory of Mangal Das and others are still visible on the scene of the encounter. Soon after this event, we find Santokh Das permanently established at Bhawani Shankarpura on the piece of freehold land which still bears his name, and on which stands a shrine bearing the impress of his feet.

In the years that followed Jaipur, in common with surrounding States, was the scene of constant warfare and pillage. The fate of the helpless cultivator, on whom the State depended for its revenue, must have been pitiable indeed. To the freebooter, the tax-gatherer, and the moneylender, the disorders of the

<sup>1</sup> A group of villages forming a sub-division of a *zila* or district.

time afforded a golden opportunity of enriching themselves at the expense of their neighbours. Under these conditions, the Nagas seldom lacked occupation, or the means of maintaining themselves in intervals of active warfare. Their ranks were being continually recruited by fresh levies to make good their heavy losses, and to enhance their fighting strength. For fifteen years after their sudden appearance in the field at Khatu, the story of the Nagas is little more than a record of grants, in land or money, for military services rendered; of a long series of loans, often of very considerable sums, to the State treasury, repaid at irregular intervals, sometimes in cash, more often in the form of writs for the appropriation of revenue from certain villages or districts; and of tax-farming on a very extensive scale. The remunerative character of these activities is seen in the erection by Santokh Das at Naraina, in 1787-88, of a large *akhara*, or monastery—actually a military barracks—for the accommodation of the fighting Nagas. Others were added later.

Most of the military operations undertaken at this time were of a minor character: the suppression of some local outbreak or the pursuit of some fugitive from justice. Some were on a larger scale. The Dadu Panthis were present in force at the Battle of Tonga (Lalsot) in 1787, when Count de Boigne, then in the service of Mahādājī Śindhia, suffered defeat at the hands of the Jaipur and Jodhpur allies. They may also have been among the body of ascetics of whom de Boigne writes as forming part of the allied armies at Patan in 1790. The Dadu Panthis had become in effect a kind of auxiliary force which could be called to the help of the State at need, and which was possibly less of a menace to peace and order when kept actively employed than in intervals of enforced idleness.

In 1797 the Dadu Panthis formally entered the service of Jaipur State. They were required to maintain their force at ■ strength of 5,000 men, though it often seems to have exceeded that number.<sup>1</sup> They were paid at the rate of half an anna ■ day.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Tod tells, for example, of 7,000 Dadu Panthis holding the fort of Khandela, in Shaikhawati, for Raja Pratap Singh. *Annals of Rajasthan*, II, p. 382 (Popular Edition).

<sup>2</sup> Later raised to 1 anna, and, in comparatively recent times, to 2 annas. The money was paid in bulk to Santokh Das, and distributed to the local treasurers at the various centres. The Nagas were not paid individually, but were maintained by the respective *beras*, or camps, to which they were attached.



From this time onwards the Nagas are much in evidence in their familiar character of collectors of revenue for the State. They were posted at various important centres, and were largely employed in difficult and turbulent areas where armed resistance to their demands was to be expected. But this by no means exhausted their duties. They were at the call of the State for all kinds of military aid. The cause in which they fought seems to have concerned them little. They were professional fighters who asked no more than the occasion for the display of their prowess and skill. They accompanied Raja Jagat Singh on his disastrous expedition to Marwar, and won great distinction by a victorious assault of 2,000 Nagas on the walls of Jodhpur, when the defending force was driven to take refuge in the fort after a three hours' struggle. "It was a glorious fight" is the laconic comment of a contemporary Naga document. The Nagas shared in the defence of Jaipur when her sometime ally, Amir Khan, after devastating the country, turned his batteries on her walls. We read also of the scaling of a fort at Khiror, when the defenders threw burning stuff beneath the scaling ladders, and the Jaipur flag was planted on the fort, with a loss of 270 killed and forty-four wounded. The proportion of killed to wounded was always high, partly no doubt on account of the fatal character of what would now be regarded as minor injuries, but largely also on account of the Naga ideal of warfare, which was always that of personal combat and war to the death.

It is not necessary to follow further the military exploits of the fighting Nagas. Enough has been said to make clear how far they had departed from the early ideals of the Panth. They acknowledged Dadu as their Guru. They paid lip-service to the *Bani*. In imitation of the Nānak Panthis (Sikhs), who played a considerable part as mercenaries in the Jaipur wars, they may have been mainly responsible for the introduction of the ritual worship of the Book. They went into battle with the name of Dadu on their lips. But of the aims and spirit of the early movement scarcely a vestige remained. The brightest spot in the sordid picture is the staunch loyalty of the Nagas to the Jaipur Raj. Even when it was hard to determine in whose hands the reins of power were, they were ever forward in upholding



what they conceived to be the authority of the State which had extended its hospitality to their Guru. They did not change masters after the fashion of the mercenaries of their day, and as the Gusains and Bairagis were wont to do. No doubt self-interest had a share in this steadfast allegiance, but the Nagas have always cherished a strong sentiment of loyalty to the State. If their services were bought, they at least gave themselves in no grudging spirit to the service of their masters.

As the condition of the country became more settled and external wars ceased as the result of the Treaty of 1818 with the British Crown, the number of Nagas in the service of Jaipur was reduced, and those who remained reverted to their traditional occupation as collectors of revenue. But throughout the political disturbances of two minorities, following upon the death of Jagat Singh, and in the earlier part of the reign of Maharaja Ram Singh (1832-79), their services as fighters were still in frequent demand. From 1823 their headquarters were at Ramgarh (Danta). In 1838 an attempt further to reduce their numbers led to a revolt which had to be suppressed by a force sent from the British cantonment at Nasirabad.

The Nagas rendered good service in the Mutiny of 1857. At Jaipur, when the State mercenary troops were on the point of revolt, the Nagas on their own authority seized the magazine and saved the situation. Also, on their own initiative they made a surprise assault on the Nawab of Narnaul (Patiala State), a descendant of their old enemy, Murtaza Ali Khan of Khatu fame, and sacked the town, with great profit to themselves. The Nawab being hostile to the British power, this demonstration of loyalty was freely condoned.

From an autograph letter in possession of the Udaipur<sup>1</sup> clan of Jaipur Nagas we learn that a body of 500 Nagas accompanied Colonel William Eden, then Political Agent at Jaipur, and Acting Agent to the Governor-General, on his march to Mathura and Gurgaon to restore order. The letter is dated "Camp, Jaipur, 3rd August, 1858", and reads:

"I desire to record my testimony to the excellent and praiseworthy conduct of Chiman Dass and the *bhundarees* or heads of the Oodeypore clan of Nagas, as well indeed as of the whole

<sup>1</sup> Udaipur in the district of Shaikhawati, Jaipur.

body of them during the past convulsion. They formed a part of the field force sent with me towards Delhi in 1857 and behaved right well. The Nagas, indeed, together with the Rajput horse, were those on whom I could alone most perfectly rely when the Artillery men and Infantry began to leave me and desert at Pulwul. Chiman Dass and his fellow-leaders are well-behaved men and well-disposed to our foot, while they display a laudable allegiance to their Chief and Master. I take this opportunity to record my sense of their good and faithful conduct, and of my personal satisfaction with their services, as well ■ with the *jamaut* or clan generally, and trust the Maharaja and durbar authorities will promote their interests as occasion may offer."

At a Durbar subsequently held at Agra a medal and *sanad* (certificate), with a gift of Rs. 500, were awarded to Chiman Das.

Santokh Das, who so long directed the affairs of the Nagas, had died, at the supposed age of 115, in 1825. Under his disciple and successor, Amolak Das, began to appear those separatist tendencies to which the later septs or clans, each with its own chief, and claiming its own portion of the annual State grant, owe their origin. First in 1844 the Lalsot clan was formed, followed in 1848 by Udaipur, and then by Chandsen. Finally, the original body, or its remaining adherents, became the Nawai clan. The places from which these clans take their names are all, as a glance at the map of Jaipur will show, strategic points at which large bodies of Nagas had long been encamped. The four groups (*jama'at*) mentioned finally became seven, with eleven *akhārās*, or settlements, each presided over by a local Mahant or abbot. Lalsot has three *akharas*, Udaipur five, Chandsen two, and Nawai, the original seat of Santokh Das, one.

In the days of the wars the Uttaradhas, or Northerners, flocked back in great numbers to Rajputana, some to share the military fortunes of the Nagas, some to advance the interests of the Panth in other ways. Some obtained *jāgīrs* and became landed proprietors. From the beginning of the nineteenth century a prosperous group of Uttaradhas who claim descent from Ādū Jī of Siwāni, a disciple of Banwari Das, has been

permanently established in Jaipur, and at Rajgarh, now in Alwar State. Others are found in many parts of Shaikhawati. The control of the Panth, which for a time seemed to have passed wholly into the hands of the militant section, now began to gravitate once more to the central *Dwara* at Naraina. Their alliance with the Jaipur State had given to the Nagas more than ever the character of professional soldiers whose interests lay in another direction than those of their non-combatant brethren. It was thus natural for the Uttaradhas, and for those settlements in which the primitive tradition was still strong, to throw the weight of their influence into the strengthening and consolidating of the position of the official head of the order at Naraina.

Reference has been made to Raghava Das's *Rosary of Saints*, completed in 1713, as an early symptom of a growing sect-consciousness on the part of Dadu's followers. The issue in 1800 of a Commentary on that work, by Chatur Das, is highly significant. This commentary is really an expansion or supplement designed to bring the poem up to date by embodying material supplied by current tradition. The Commentary emanates from the settlement at Fatehpur, for ever associated with the name of the poet Sundar Das, and may be said to represent the movement on its scholastic or apologetic side. It presents the Dadu legend in a more advanced form than is found either in the *Rosary* itself, or in the successive redactions of Jan Gopal's *Life Story of Dadu*. It is in fact the final crystallisation of the Dadu tradition in the form in which we are familiar with it to-day. It is not necessary to ascribe to Chatur Das the invention of the new material found in the Commentary. His aim was simply to put down in attractive literary form the stories already current in the Panth. But the production of such work is evidence of the continued activities of the Panth outside the militant movement, and the confident belief that the cult of Dadu had a great future, as well as a great past.

Another token of this confident outlook was the erection in 1827 of the handsome Dadu temple at Naraina. In 1820, two years after the conclusion of the treaty which brought Jaipur under the protection of the British power, Mahant Dalai Ram ascended the *gaddi*. With his election the ancient shrine became



invested with something of its old dignity and authority. The disruptive influences that began to show themselves among the Nagas after the death of Santokh Das in 1825 accentuated the need of a central authority to which appeal could be made. Naraina, with its hallowed associations and precious relics, was already ■ place of pilgrimage for Dadu's followers from all over northern India. It was the scene of the annual festivals which gave unity and coherence to the different branches of the order. The desire was widespread for some more worthy symbol of the piety and devotion of a later generation than the simple *bārāhdarī*, or pillared courtyard, which had hitherto done duty ■ a place of worship. It was to a member of the Uttaradha community, a successful physician of Patiala, Thandhi Ram by name, that the Panth was indebted for the beautiful temple of white marble which now forms the central feature of the Naraina *Dadudwara*. A contemporary tablet records that the temple was built at a cost of Rs. 31,505. This amount, it is explained, represents the cost of labour only, the marble from Makrana being the gift of Maharaja Man Singh, then ruler of Marwar (Jodhpur), in recognition of the medical services of Thandhi Ram to the royal household. The building is after the model of the ordinary Hindu temple, the main difference being that the *Bani* takes the place of the customary idol in the inner shrine.



## Chapter Twelve

### THE LITERATURE OF THE DADU PANTH

THE literary output of the Panth has been considerable. Dadu's first disciples and their immediate successors produced a large quantity of devotional verse in Hindi, not all of the first quality, but some of it of very high merit. Unfortunately, most of their works are available only in handwritten volumes. With the exception of Dadu's own *Bani*, only the poems of Sundar Das, and the *Bani* of Rajjab, have appeared in print.

Little more need be said of the *Dadu Janmalila* (*Life Story of Dadu*) of Jan Gopal, of which extensive use has been made in preceding chapters. Jan Gopal was one of three disciples of that name, and is believed to have lived at Fatehpur Sikri. Other poems of this writer include lives of Dhruva and Prahlad. The original *Life Story* may perhaps be dated somewhere between 1610 and 1620, and its final revision about 1720-30. A second *Janmalila* on much the same lines is ascribed to another of Dadu's disciples, Madhu Das. This too is probably a re-edited version of a genuinely early work. In its present form it can hardly be placed earlier than 1800.<sup>1</sup>

Of outstanding worth are the works of Rajjab Das and of Sundar Das. Of all Dadu's disciples, "Rajjabji" probably entered most deeply into his master's mind and was best fitted to expound his message. Dadu is said to have treated him more as an equal than as a disciple. Even in Dadu's lifetime Rajjab's poems were in wide use among his fellow disciples, and

<sup>1</sup> Both works mention Ahmedabad as Dadu's birthplace. Madhu Das has a longer story of Dadu's childhood, and represents him as brought up as an adopted son in the house of a Nagar Brahman. After his meeting with Buddhan at the age of eleven, Dadu leaves Ahmedabad, and comes *via* Abu to Kadrula in Marwar (Jodhpur), where he remains till the age of eighteen. Thence he travelled to Pushkar and Ajmer and through Mewar (Udaipur), and finally came to Karauli, where he made his first appearance as a teacher at the age of eighteen (1562). In the same year he came to Sambhar, where he remained till 1575. Madhu Das gives the names of between thirty and forty disciples made by Dadu at Sambhar. He also mentions a brother of Dadu's (adoptive) father, Lodi Ram, by Anandi Ram, who lived at Pushkar, and came to visit Dadu, after he became famous, at Sambhar in 1572. The rest of the narrative closely follows Jan Gopal.

previous to the collection of Dadu's own "oracles" appear to have formed their main devotional reading. Rajjab's quotations from other writers reveal the wide extent of his reading, and his contact with different schools. His easy command of the Hindi vernacular is less surprising when we remember his Hindu ancestry, but his writing is characterised no less by literary grace than by depth of thought. Through all his poems breathes an intensely devotional spirit.

The *Rajjab Bani*, his best-known work, much of it written after Dadu's death, is really a collection of smaller works dealing with a great variety of subjects, brought together in a single volume. The main portion of the book is made up of the *sākhī* of Rajjab, over 5,000 in number, divided into 193 chapters, followed by a collection of hymns in some twenty different metres, rather after the manner of Dadu's *Bani* as edited by Rajjab and others. The *Sawaiye* includes Rajjab's tribute to Garib Das, and his laments over the passing of Dadu. In its present form, Rajjab's *Bani* incorporates material contributed by several of his disciples. The closing section consists of songs in praise of Rajjabji. In 1918 a printed edition of this comprehensive work was issued from the Gyan Sagar Press, Bombay. The text is far from accurate, and in some cases the meaning is entirely obscured. Manuscript copies, however, exist in large numbers, and fuller justice may yet be done to a work into which Rajjab has poured the wealth of his knowledge and reflection.

Less well-known is ■ second voluminous work of Rajjab's called the *Sarvāṅgayoga* (The Complete Yoga). This takes the form of an elaborate commentary on the sayings and hymns of Dadu, with parallel passages cited from Rajjab's own poems and those of a large number of other writers. The book consists of 142 chapters, and is a monument of careful study and patient industry. Rajjab gathered round him a galaxy of talented disciples, several of whom were poets of no mean order. Sundar Das was his devoted admirer and lifelong friend.

Sundar Das was primarily the scholar and poet. If he lacks the prophetic fire of Dadu, of which Rajjab possessed not ■ little, he is second to none in loyalty to the memory of his Guru. Sundar Das was ■ prolific writer and a poet of real distinction.

His collected works fill two large printed volumes. Thanks to the scholarly labours of Purohit Hari Narayan, B.A., Vidya-bhushan, of Jaipur, a thoroughly reliable text of the complete works of Sundar Das, with annotations, is now at the service of the Hindi reader.<sup>1</sup> No English translation has yet been published. Only some of his more important works can be mentioned here. Of these the most widely-known are the *Gyān Samudra* (Ocean of Knowledge) and the *Sawaiye*, popularly known as the *Sundar Vilās* (Delight of Sundar).

The *Ocean of Knowledge*, dated 1653, is a popular exposition of the way of *bhakti*, and of the teaching of the Samkhya and the Vedānta. It takes the form of a dialogue between master and disciple. It relates the disciple's quest of a guru who can dispel his doubts, and lead him to a knowledge of divine truth. The various types of *bhakti* are expounded. Yoga is then discussed, with the bodily and mental exercises prescribed for the attainment of *samādhi* or complete detachment from the life of the senses. The Samkhya system and the way of salvation it teaches are then dealt with. The disciples' mind being thus prepared, he is admitted to the final mystery of the "One without a second".

The *Sawaiye*, an earlier work, takes its name from the dominant metre in which it is written. It consists of thirty-four chapters on a large variety of subjects. Both in matter and arrangement, it bears a strong resemblance to the *Bani* of Dadu, on which it may be regarded as a kind of commentary. It is less of a philosophical work than the *Ocean of Knowledge*, and is by far the most popular of Sundar Das's poems. Many printed editions have been published. It is written in the interests of *bhakti*, and its devotional and practical aim are manifest throughout.

The *Sarvāṅgayoga Granth* (Book of Complete Yoga) was apparently written earlier than the *Ocean of Knowledge* and partly covers the same ground. As in Rajjab's work of the same name the word "yoga" is used in its more general sense of "method" or "way" (*yukti*). The book deals in turn with the way of *bhakti*, with the disciplinary exercises prescribed by the

<sup>1</sup> *Sundar Granthāvalī*, published by the Rajasthan Research Society, Calcutta (1939).



Yoga system, and finally with the way of knowledge treated under four heads. The series culminates, as in the later poem, in pure monism as the highest attainment of the human spirit.

Among the larger and more important works of Sundar Das is a collection of *sakhis* and hymns, after the manner of Dadu and Kabir, and mostly on the same themes. Of the thirty-one chapters, all but eight have the same titles as the corresponding sections of the *Sawaiye*. Among the shorter poems, the *Panchendriya Charitra* (Pictures of the Five Senses) sets forth the special allurements of each of the five senses in a series of analogies drawn from the animal world. Such similitudes abound in Sanskrit literature. A section is devoted to each picture, and a sixth points the moral of the whole. Somewhat after the same style is the *Adbhut Upadesh* (The Wonderful Teaching). Five sons of one father fall into evil company. By good fortune, one of them (Hearing) met the True Teacher, who warned him that he and his four brothers were in the hands of robbers, whose design was to plunder and murder them. Upon this the son went to his father (the Mind) and the two sought the presence of the Guru. The Guru summoned the other four sons. "Let all be of one counsel", he said, "and they will find a way of escape. Let Eyes behold only the vision of Hari, and the robber Form will disappear. Let Nostrils inhale the fragrance of Hari's lotus feet, and there will be an end of the robber Scent. Let Tongue continually repeat Hari's name, and the robber Taste will flee away. Let the flesh (Skin) long for union with the Lord, and Touch will lose its power over him. Let Hearing only listen to Hari's praises, and the robber Sound (Voice) will trouble him no more." Acting on this advice, the five brothers, with their father, found deliverance, and were received by the Great Teacher as his disciples.

The *Sadguru Mahimā Granth* is in praise of the divine Teacher, represented by Dadu. He is as the glorious sun, as the chaste moon, as an exceeding deep ocean, as a spreading tree imparting its grateful shade. His sayings are rain-laden clouds distributing joy; they are as the sandal-tree impregnating all others with its sweet aroma; they are as the philosopher's stone changing all it touches into gold.

The Twelve *Ashṭak* (eight-line poems) form a group by



themselves. Four are in praise of Dadu ■ the Divine teacher, and are now sung by members of the Panth at the close of their daily worship. A feature of Sundar Das's works is the variety of acrostic figures and designs with which they are adorned. Excellent reproductions of these are given in Purohit Hari Narayan's *Sundar Granthavali*. The literary fame of Sundar Das has brought much distinction to the cult.

Among other disciples of Dadu who have written hymns and poems are Pandit Jag Jiwan, a Brahman by caste, Bakhna, a Muhammadan of humble birth who belonged to the class of *mīrāsī*, or professional singers, Tila, of the Jat or cultivator caste, one of the editors of the *Bani*, Prayag Das of Didwana, ■ Mahajan (mercantile caste), and an intimate friend of the poet Sundar Das and of Banwari Das, of Uttaradha fame. Banwari Das was also a composer of *sakhis* and other verses.

The later literature of the Panth can only be briefly dealt with. We have already had frequent occasion to mention the *Bhaktamāla* (Rosary of Saints) of Ragho (Raghava) Das. Ragho appears to have been attached to the *thambha* of the elder Sundar Das at Ghatra. Later tables of descent represent him as head of the settlement, and the immediate predecessor of the noted Naga leader Keval Das. The general belief is, however, that he was a *vinakta*, or wandering sadhu, with no administrative duties. Apart from his special interest in Sundar Das, there is little trace of Naga influence in his book. The *Bhaktamala*, completed in 1713, is one of a number of similar works modelled on the more famous *Bhaktamala* of Nābhājī, written about a century earlier. Ragho's poem, like the original, is often concise to the point of obscurity, and assumes on the part of the reader some previous knowledge of the events related. It is in fact, as its name suggests, an aid to memory, being primarily intended as a devotional manual. It has indeed another purpose—namely, to give Dadu his rightful place in the roll of saints. The main body of the work is non-sectarian, the bulk of its material being borrowed from Nabhaji; but interest naturally centres in Dadu and his followers, and the subsequent history of the Panth.

The *Rosary* also resembles the original *Bhaktamala* in being provided with a Commentary of much later date (1800) which

is of the nature of a supplement to, rather than a mere elucidation of the text. The Commentary is the work of Chatur Das of Fatehpur, a fellow disciple of Lal Das, the sixth in succession from Sundar Das the Younger. It is now generally incorporated in modern versions of the *Bhaktamala*, but copies of the older work without commentary may still be seen. Ragho was the author of several other poems which are still in circulation. These include a large number of *sakhis* and a collection of hymns in various metres. In a volume of miscellaneous poems (*Phutkar Sawaiye*) there is much interesting information regarding the members of Dadu's family at Naraina which is not to be found elsewhere. Ragho would also seem to be the only writer who has made use of the poet Sundar Das's fanciful genealogy of Dadu, in the *Guru Sampradaya*, to which we have already referred. One gets the impression of Ragho Das as one whose main interest lay in gathering up and turning into verse every scrap of information he could find bearing on the early days of the Panth. It should be added that a careful comparison of earlier copies of the *Rosary* with the current versions reveal that the hand of later editors is to be traced, not only in the Commentary, but in the original poem.<sup>1</sup>

Among the disciples of Rajjab Das, Khem Das and Mohan Das (an intimate friend of the younger Sundar Das) wrote many poems; Chhitar Das and Sital Das wrote verses in praise of Dadu. Contemporary with Ragho Das's *Rosary* is the *Dadu Vilās* of Tilawat<sup>2</sup> Tulsi Das. Prahlad Das, a disciple, and Hari Das, a grand-disciple of Sundar Das, both enjoyed a reputation as poets. Ātmā Bihārī, a later disciple, wrote an account of the Fatehpur *thambha*. Dayāl Das, a disciple of Jagannath, and Chatur Das, a disciple of Sant Das, were the authors of poems still extant. Other early writers whose works are still remembered and quoted are Anant Das, Chhitam Das, Dasji, Atma Ram, Balak Das, Bhikh Jan (a Dom) and Ram Das. As few of these works are readily accessible, even to the Hindi reader, it would be wearisome to enumerate them.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dadu's visit to Akbar, for example, compressed into half a line in modern versions, has no place in the original.

<sup>2</sup> Disciple or descendant of Tila, an original disciple of Dadu.

<sup>3</sup> Manuscript copies of the works of most of the writers named are found in the unique collection of Purohit Hari Narayan of Jaipur, to whom I am indebted for much of the information contained in this chapter.

The most famous Dadu Panthi writer of modern times is Nischal Das, whose two principal works, the *Vichār Sāgar* and the *Vritti Prabhākar*, have both been printed. In the Preface to the former, the publisher gives 1863 ■ the year of the author's death, at his village of Kirdoli, near Delhi. Nishchal Das was ■ thorough-going Vedantist, an able exponent of the philosophy of Shankaracharya, and a keen public debater. He visited Jaipur in the reign of Maharaja Sawai Ram Singh and conducted many learned discussions there. His books are by no means easy reading, and few, with the exception of some able Hindu scholars, have attempted to master them. To the student of Dadu they are of interest mainly ■ an indication of the steady trend of the movement back to the position of orthodox Hinduism.

The history of the Nagas is commemorated in the *Sundarodaya* (Dawn of Sundar) written by Mangal Rām of Jakhal (in Shaikhawati, Jaipur) towards the end of last century. Mangal Ram is the author of numerous other works, but none of these is available in printed form.

A life of Dadu in Sanskrit, the *Dādūrāmodaya* (Dawn of Dadu), by Hīrā Dās of Bhiwānī (Bihānī), Hissar, was published by the Venkateshwar Press, Bombay, in 1890.

While it does not fall strictly within the scope of this chapter, it will be convenient to refer here to a Bengali work, *Dadu*, by Kshiti Mohan Sen of Shantiniketan, published by the Visva-bhārati Granthālaya, Calcutta, in 1936. The book is prefaced by a sketch of Dadu's life, and consists chiefly of Bengali renderings of selections from Dadu's poems, with an accompanying exposition of his teaching.



## Chapter 'Thirteen

### THE MODERN PANTH: NUMBERS, ORGANISATION, WORSHIP

IT is not easy to form even an approximate estimate of the present numerical strength of the Dadu Panth. No official record is kept at Naraina of the numbers attached to the various settlements nominally under its jurisdiction. The Government Census affords little help, for the reason that members of the Panth enrol themselves under a bewildering variety of names, as Dadu Panthis, Nagas, Swamis, Sadhus, Sanyogis (married sadhus), etc., and it is thus impossible to distinguish them from adherents of other sects using the same designations. Until recently the Nagas (nominally 5,000) in the service of Jaipur State seemed to form a well-defined group, but investigation showed—even before the final break-up of the historic *jama'ats* in 1938—that their numbers fell considerably short of the quota they were required to maintain. This reduced figure, of course, stands in no direct relation to the total strength of the Naga community, many of whom have abandoned military service in favour of other modes of life.<sup>1</sup>

The celibate members of the Panth, even including the Nagas, can hardly amount at the present time to more than a few thousand. Some would regard even this as a liberal estimate. If all classes of male adherents, married and unmarried, are included, the number will probably be three or four times as large. If to these are added women and children—and the census returns of "females" give no accurate indication of the

<sup>1</sup> The Jaipur State Census for 1911 gave the number of "Dadu Panthis" in Jaipur territory ■ 7,041 (male 6,989, female 58), and the number of "Nagas" as 298 (male 296, female 2). Clearly under the former head are entered the main body of Nagas in State service, the 296 Nagas representing the small proportion (including Nimawats, also employed by the State) who chose to register themselves under that designation. The figures for 1921 are: "Dadu Panthis", 5,140 (male 5,075, female 65); "Nagas", 83 (male 79, female 4). In 1931 Nagas were no longer recorded ■ such. The number of "Dadu Panthis" is given as 5,421. Incidentally, the number of "Sadhus" has risen (statistically) from 243 in 1911 to 10,986 in 1931. The census returns for other Indian States, ■ well as for British India, are not less confusing. The figures that follow ■ based mainly on information supplied by well-informed members of the Panth, and ■ their estimates vary widely.



number of women attached to the community—the total strength of the Panth will possibly not fall short of 12,000 to 15,000, or even more. No useful estimate can be formed of the number of Sevaks or lay members. In modern times the term has come to be applied very generally, not only to actual members of the Panth, but also to wealthy patrons who assist with contributions. The Panth has many such generous helpers among caste Hindus.

The Rev. John Traill<sup>1</sup> gives the following classification of Dadu's followers. 1. Khālsā. 2. Nāgā. 3. Utrādī (Uttaradha). 4. Virkat (Virakta). 5. Khākī. To these have to be added the Sevaks, or lay-members. The above divisions, it is explained, are not sectarian, but merely geographical or occupational. It should be added that they are not all mutually exclusive. The Virakta, for example, may belong to any branch of the order, Khalsa, Naga, or Uttaradha. The same is true of the Khakis, though in point of fact they will generally be found to be of Naga origin, as in Bundi State. Again, as disciples of Banwari Das, the Uttaradhas rightly regard themselves as a legitimate branch of the Khalsas, and none have done more to establish the authority of the central *Dwara* at Naraina. In short, the one really important distinction, as in other religious orders which played a part in the militant movement, is that between the Naga, or professional warrior, and the *bona-fide*, i.e. non-combatant, member of the Panth, and their modern descendants.

Leaving aside for the moment the Nagas, who form a group by themselves, we find that the Panth consists mainly of Khalsas and Uttaradhas. The title *Khālsā* (pure), borrowed from the Sikhs, but used with a slightly different signification,<sup>2</sup> is applied to all members of the sect attached to the original *Dadu-dwara* at Naraina, or to one of the *thambhas* founded by Dadu's immediate disciples. It appears to have come into use at a time when the rapid growth of the movement in the North, followed by the rise of the Nagas, was felt to be a menace to the purity of the original tradition. The Khalsas do not generally engage in

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. IV, art. "Dadu."

<sup>2</sup> The term *Khālsā*, among the Sikhs, is used of those who have received the *pahul*, or baptism of the sword, instituted by the Tenth Guru, Govind.

commerce, but have agricultural and landed interests, and travel much from place to place, thus becoming involved in various forms of business. Nominally, they have the oversight of the entire order. Many are directly engaged in the service of the *Dwara* at Naraina, which possesses many villages from which it derives a large revenue. The clothing of the Khalsa is white. The *dhoti*, or loin-cloth, used to be worn skirt-wise, but this fashion is not now universally followed. Characteristic of the Khalsa is the small white skull-cap (*kapālī*), often exchanged in the cold weather for a high cylindrical quilted head-dress (*topā*) which leaves only the face exposed.

The Uttarādhās (Northerners), a wealthy and enterprising community, are distinguished chiefly by the milder discipline they enjoin and the freedom with which they engage in secular pursuits. Among their favourite occupations are agriculture, medicine, teaching, banking and commerce. Like the Khalsa, the Uttaradha is clothed in white, though his garments are often of richer quality, and he is not averse to the wearing of ornaments. His turban is the ascetic yellow, or white. Of the present-day Uttaradhas, the most numerous are the disciples of Banwari Das and his immediate followers, but the name is now applied more or less generally to those widely scattered communities in Rajputana, Central India, Gujerat and elsewhere who follow the same mode of life. They are often described as “Makānwāle”, “dwellers in houses”—that is, living in their own homes. This does not necessarily imply that they are married men, though in modern times many of them are. Little groups of Uttaradhas are to be found throughout Rohtak and Hissar, the home of Banwari Das, and as far north ■ Multan, also in the Panjab States of Jīnd, Nābhā, Patialā and Farīdkot; in many parts of Shaikhawati, in Jaipur State, where they have a large following of prosperous men of business; in Jodhpur, Bikanir and other Rajput States; as well as in Gujerat, Central India, and Hyderabad.

The Virakta, or devotee, differs little in appearance from the ordinary Hindu ascetic. He is clad in the typical yellow robe, but wears no sect-mark on his forehead. Begging, while recognised as ■ legitimate means of livelihood for those engaged in teaching and preaching, is less prevalent among Dadu Panthis

than in many religious orders. Work is encouraged, and most of the *thambhas* are self-supporting. Thus, the Dadu Panthi Virakta is not an importunate beggar, and seldom solicits alms from strangers. He goes where he is welcomed, and accepts food and shelter from those to whom he is well-known. The healthy, well-cared-for look of many of these unaggressive ascetics is doubtless due in part to the fact that they are largely immune from the privations and hardships that beset the life of the casual mendicant. Wherever they go, in sickness or in health, they may freely claim the simple hospitality of their brethren in the faith.

Of the more extreme forms of austerity professed by the *Khākīs* (dust-clad) and others of the same class little need be said, beyond to note that their manner of life represents a complete departure from the teaching and practice of Dadu. *Sulfa*-smoking and *bhang*-drinking are the besetting vice of this group. They are not very numerous, and are held in little esteem by other members of the Panth.

There are estimated to be not more than between 200 and 250 Dadu Panthi Viraktas in all at the present time. In this figure *Khakis* of all descriptions are probably included.

We now return to the Nagas. The Naga is the Dadu Panthi most familiar to the European visitor to Rajputana. He is easily recognised by his war-like beard, his white shirt and skirt-like *dhoti* reaching to the knees, and the sword or gun he usually carries. His displays of sword-play were long a prominent feature of State entertainments in Jaipur. The ornate velvet jacket and short pants worn on these occasions were a State uniform, not a mark of his order. His official dress was white, with a leathern belt about his waist. On the occasion of the great Hindu festivals, which the Nagas attend in large numbers, he frequently resumes the rôle of the naked sadhu. The sadhu's robe is never worn by modern Nagas, with the exception of the Viraktas among them, who are exempt from military duty.

As recently as 1938 the four famous *jama'ats* were finally dispersed. The Naga host with its primitive weapons and obsolete methods of warfare was an obvious anachronism in a modern State. Only its distinguished past saved it from earlier dissolution. Time was, not more than a century ago, when the



Naga force was too powerful to be summarily disbanded. Of recent years its main problem has been to keep its numbers up to the required standard. Many of the Nagas were engaged in agriculture, money-lending and other pursuits, and the State grant (latterly at the rate of Rs. 4 per head *per mensem* for 5,000 men) was regarded ■ a supplementary source of income. Not more than 1,000 were in active employment as State servants.

Each of the four *jama'ats* was required to supply a fixed quota of men to each *tahsil*, or local revenue centre, to assist in the collection of taxes. The writer has been told that the recent practice was for a household of five to supply one member for duty at the *tahsil* and to hold a second in reserve to take his place when necessary.

In 1938 the strength of the Jaipur Nagas, estimated at about 3,000, was reduced to 1,140. They are now divided into three bodies: (1) *Tahsil* Nagas, the most numerous, about 900 men; (2) *Qilajāt* Nagas, who serve as guards on forts and palaces; and (3) *Khandet* Nagas, now a mere handful, who appear in State processions and on other ceremonial occasions. A Naga Infantry Company has also been formed. It seems probable that the traditional settlements of the four clans at Niwai, Lalsot, Udaipur, and Chandsen will continue for a time to be the home of many of the Nagas and their descendants. Numbers of them have indeed migrated and will migrate in search of fresh employment, and the final disappearance of the Nagas as a separate community would seem to be only a matter of time.

Until about a quarter of a century ago a considerable body of Dadu Panthis, along with other Nagas, were employed in police duty in Kotah and Bundi States. The Nagas were posted at important centres close to the State boundaries, mainly for the suppression of dacoity. Several hundreds were employed, chiefly as guards, in Jodhpur State till the Naga forces were disbanded towards the close of last century by Maharaja Jaswant Singh. Of the 4,138 Dadu Panthis (2,130 male, 2,008 female) shown in the Jodhpur census returns for 1894, a considerable portion must have belonged to the Naga community, though the figures include members of the Garibdasot clan and other Dadu Panthi settlers in Marwar.



Little remains to be said of the Sevaks, or servants, the name originally given to married disciples who constituted the lay members of the order from the time of Jait Sahib. There are several groups of these, as at Narnaul in Patiala State and at Andhi in Jaipur, who have never adopted the rule of celibacy. In modern times, when marriage has become common, members of the Panth who marry and settle down in their own homes are not ordinarily described as "sevaks", but retain the name of "sadhu", or ascetic. We may instance the modern settlement of Uttaradha cultivators at Khandwa. The term "sevak", as we have seen, has come to be used very freely of Hindu friends and helpers of the Panth. There is indeed little in the mode of life of the modern Dadu Panthi householder to distinguish him from his Hindu neighbours.

The ceremony of admission to the Panth is extremely simple, and seems to have come down substantially unchanged from early times. It was long the custom of the Panth to recruit its ranks by adoption. This was true especially of the Nagas, who were under the necessity of keeping their numbers up to the required strength. In the old fighting days, the adoption of suitable children for training in the use of arms must have taken place on a large scale, as in the case of the Sannyāsīs and Bairāgis.

Under present conditions the necessity for adoption in any considerable numbers has ceased, but the practice is still not uncommon. The admission of adult converts is now comparatively rare. The boy adopted may be an orphan or an unwanted stepchild, or the child may be made over in fulfilment of a vow, perhaps on recovery from sickness. There are families in which the tradition of dedicating one son to the Panth still survives. But adoption is much less frequent than in former times, and it is a fact of common knowledge that the great bulk of the children to be found in almost any Dadu Panthi settlement are born within the community.

In adoption, the important thing is that the boy should be legally made over to the Panth, so that no later claim to custody on the part of his relatives may arise. The essential features of the initiatory rite are two. The first is the cutting off of the *chutiya*, or tuft of hair on the crown of the head. This perpetuates

the now almost obsolete idea of the "middle way": the novitiate is no longer either a Hindu or a Musalman.<sup>1</sup>

The second essential point is the teaching of the Invocation with which each section of the *Bani* opens, together with the "twenty-four Names" or "Letters" (attributes of God) found in the section of the *Bani* entitled "The Divine Guru".<sup>2</sup> No secret *mantra* (incantation) is taught as part of the initiatory rite. Each boy admitted to the order is placed under the care of a Baba (father) whose business it is to instruct him in the faith, and be generally responsible for his training. The novitiate becomes a member of the branch of the Panth to which his preceptor belongs. There is no explicit rule as to the castes from which boys may be adopted. The practice, except among the Nagas, is to receive only children of good caste. In the case of the Nagas, boys are adopted from any of the "clean" castes—that is, those of the humbler castes from whose hands water may be drunk: namely, the Jat (cultivator), the Gujar (cattle raiser), the Mali (gardener), and the agricultural section of the Kumhar (potter) caste. Agricultural Minas (an aboriginal tribe) are also admitted by the Nagas. The rite of initiation for adult converts does not differ materially from that already described. Among the Nagas the shaving of the head and the smearing of the face with ashes is said to have been common in the case both of adults and of children.

The ritual of the Dadu temple centres in the worship of the *Bani*. In this it resembles the Sikh worship of the Granth, or Sacred Book, though the mode of worship is different. The *Bani*, resting on a *gaddi* or cushion, takes the place of the idol in a Hindu temple. Within the shrine are generally found one or two pictures. The favourite scenes represented are those of Dadu's first meeting with the "Aged One", and of his interview with Akbar. There may also be, as at Amber, a pair of wooden sandals, or some other relic. In Naga shrines it is not unusual to find one or two small images of Hindu deities. In the Naraina temple only the *Bani* is visible, a very early manuscript volume wrapped in a red and gold cloth, with a coloured

<sup>1</sup> In modern times the wearing of the *chutiya* by Dadu Panthis is quite common.

<sup>2</sup> *Gurudasa* 155. This concatenation of names, which in its present context makes a very awkward interpolation, is probably best explained either as a rhapsodical utterance of Dadu himself (cf. such passages as 4: 268, etc.), or as a collation by the early editors of the names of God most frequently used in the *Bani*.

rosary laid across it. Beneath the Book, but completely hidden from view, are preserved the robe and a few other articles of clothing worn by Dadu. The shrines at Sambhar and Amber, on the other hand, are crowded with pictures, mirrors, and relics of various kinds.

In front of the shrine, where space permits, there is usually a raised platform in the form of a *barahdari* or pillared veranda, for the accommodation of those who lead the communal worship. During worship the Mahant or officiating priest stands within the shrine, while the worshippers, after prostrating themselves before the *Bani*, take their stand in rows on either side of the shrine, and at right angles to it, leaving a clear passage down the middle.

Worship, called *Āratī*, is performed morning and evening. The morning worship is short and simple, consisting mainly of the recital of the Invocation of Niranjana, and the intoning of a selected passage or passages from the *Bani*. The evening worship is more formal and elaborate, and invariably follows one order—namely: (1) Prostration, (2) Chanting of *Aratī* passages from the *Dadu Bani*, (3) Prostration, (4) Selections from hymns of Sundar Das, and (5) Final Prostration, with muttered prayers. The worshippers stand during the recital of passages from the *Bani*, but remain seated while the *Ashtak*, or eight-lined poems, of Sundar Das are being sung. Only the first two, or at most three, of the collection of five *Aratī* hymns are generally used. The hymns of Sundar Das used in worship are, first the disciple's prayer from the *Gyān Samudra* (I: 22–29) beginning "O Divine Master (*Aho Deva Svāmī*)", and second, that having as its refrain, "Salutation to the Divine Dadu (*Namo Deva Dādū*)", taken from the *Guru Mahimā*.<sup>1</sup> The act of prostration (*dandwat*) is not unlike that ordinarily used by Hindus. The worshipper goes down on hands and knees, and then stretches himself at full length face downwards on the ground. The hands are then drawn up to the shoulders, and the body raised towards the kneeling posture and lowered again (in the case of the Dadu Panthis) three times, the forehead being brought at each obeisance in contact with the ground.

The ritual performed by the officiating priest is very like that

<sup>1</sup> See *Sundar Granthavali*, pp. 11 and 255–56 (Vol. I).



of the Hindu temple, but there is (ordinarily) no sounding of drums, bells, or gongs. Incense is burned, but except on special occasions there is no waving of lights. Lamps are used merely to illuminate the shrine. During the chanting of the *Arati* the priest stands on one side of the *Bani* waving a *chāmṛā*, or fly-switch, in front of it with a slow circular movement, a turn and a half in one direction, and the same in the other. On the occasion of the annual fair at Naraina a row of musicians, with various kinds of instruments, sits on either side of the shrine beating time to the *Arati*. In the temple at Sambhar, the *naqqārā*, or kettledrum, is regularly used. Offerings of sandalwood, flowers, and sweets, as well as money, are presented at the shrine by those who visit it.

At the entrance to the Mahant's apartments at Naraina is a vessel containing holy water, from the washing of his feet, of which each is expected to partake as he goes to pay his homage. The same obeisance is made to the Mahant, as representing the Guru, as to the *Bani* in the temple.

Reference may also be made to the familiar practice, not peculiar to the Dadu Panthis, of taking and rubbing on the forehead a little dust from the temple threshold on entering, in remembrance of the fact that it has been trodden by the feet of the saints.

Close to the Naraina temple are the marble cenotaphs of former occupants of the *gaddi* from the time of Jait Sahib, each with an inscription and the conventional imprint of two feet in marble. Here too, chiefly at the annual festival, the pious disciple comes to do homage, and to join with his brethren in hymns of praise.

But the most hallowed spot of all within the temple precincts is the simple little whitewashed shrine, distinguished only by a carved lotus flower, in the shade of the *khejra*-tree under which Dadu died. However perfunctory his visit to the *Dwara*, no follower of Dadu neglects to prostrate himself at that shrine.

There are only four recognised *Dadu-dwaras*—namely, those at Naraina, Amber, Sambhar and Bairana (Bachhun). On these sites temples have arisen, and there are several other Dadu temples, including one recently erected at Hardwar. But a temple does not constitute a *dwara*, whose status is due to its



direct historical association with Dadu. The settlements founded by the Fifty-Two are known as *thambhas*, or foundations. The *akhara*, or monastic retreat (literally court, arena), dates from the time of the military organisation of the Panth. Other centres are designated by such general names ■ *sthān* (place) or *maṭh* (monastery).

Domestic worship in the smaller settlements is necessarily simpler, but on exactly the same lines, as in the Dadu temple. The order of evening worship especially never varies. The shrine may be only a recess in the wall, hallowed by the presence of the *Bani*. Even an officiating priest is not essential. It is sufficient that the shrine be lit, even by a hurricane lantern, so that the Book is visible. The essential feature is the recital of the *Arati*.

In the central *Vidyālaya* (school) in Jaipur, to which further reference will be made presently, the pupils themselves are responsible for the conduct of evening worship. The appointments are of the simplest, but the service is an almost exact replica of the worship at Naraina. Incense is burned, and two senior pupils stand, one on either side of the shrine, waving their graceful fans rhythmically before it. The final prostration is accompanied by muttered prayers: "Blessing on our evening worship", "Victory to Dadu Dayal".

The head of the order at Naraina bears the title of Mahant. The Mahant has the privilege of nominating his own successor to the *gaddi*, but the appointment is not valid until the nomination has been approved by the Panth, or its chosen representatives, and the new Mahant formally elected. There are also a Mahant of the Palace, and a Mahant of the Cenotaphs, the origin of whose offices has already been explained.

There are also local Mahants, elected by the members of the branch of the Panth to which they belong. In the case of a disputed succession, it was not uncommon for the rival candidate to set up a separate *gaddi* of his own. Among the Nagas, for example, in place of the original *gaddi* of Santokh. Das there are now no less than ten, distributed among the four clans.

The secular affairs of the *Dwara* are in the hands of a *Bhandārī*, or Treasurer, assisted by a staff of minor officials. The

more important centres have their own local treasurers and subordinate staff. Each settlement is practically an independent unit, drawing its own revenue and maintaining its own establishment. All are expected to contribute according to their means to the support of the central *Dwara*, but there is no fixed levy, contributions being entirely voluntary. These contributions take the form of ■ *nazānā*, or gift, to the head of the order on the occasion of a formal visit to the *Dwara*.

The term "Swami" (Master), which is not an official title, is properly used of a recognised spiritual leader. It was the name given to Dadu himself. In modern times it has become largely an honorific title. The correct designation of a member of the order is "Sadhu".

In recent years a new office, that has no place in the original constitution of the Panth, has come to be recognised—that, namely, of *Panch*, or Arbitrator. In the case of a dispute arising within the Panth, it was no doubt customary, in accordance with Indian usage, to appoint a small committee, or *panchāyat*, to deal with the matter and issue its decision. The tendency is—for such appointments to become permanent. This is precisely what has happened in the case of the modern representatives of the *thambha* of Chatur Das at Kaladera. A few generations ago one Rati Ram of Kaladera, a well-educated, prosperous and influential member of the Panth, acquired the status of *Panch*. This office has come down from guru to disciple in regular succession for five generations. The *Panch* associates with him others whose opinions are respected, or he may summon a general meeting of members of the Panth. Each member may express his views, but the *Panch's* decision is final. The rights of the community are conserved by the fact of the *Panch's* holding office by general consent. His position depends on the confidence of the community in his fairness and sound judgment.

There are also local *panchayats*. When a dispute arises, each party to it may appoint one *panch* or more, and agree to accept his ruling. Similarly, in a question affecting the whole community, each section of the Panth is represented by a certain number of *panch* chosen by themselves. In case of ■ civil action being brought in the State Courts, the usual procedure is for the court to instruct the disputants to have the matter settled

by *panchayat*. The court then confirms the *panchayat's* decision, which has thus the force of law.

In recent years there has been a vigorous effort on the part of influential members of the Panth to restore its early reputation for scholarship and discipline, which at times seemed to be in danger of total eclipse. Special attention has been paid to the education and training of the rising generation, many of whom were being allowed to grow up in a state of indolence and ignorance. Some twenty-five years ago a residential school was opened in Jaipur for boys of all branches of the Panth. Education was free and the curriculum embraced both secular and religious subjects. The school began in a small way, but has steadily grown in numbers, and is now recognised as an educational centre for the entire Panth in Jaipur and surrounding states. Anglo-Vernacular education is not encouraged, but a sound Hindi education is given, with a little instruction in English for practical purposes. Numbers of promising pupils have been sent on to the Jaipur Sanskrit College to study Hindu philosophy, and particularly *ayurvedic* medicine. It is typical of the present-day trend of the movement that the study of the *Bani* holds a much less important place in the scheme of instruction than might naturally have been expected. A new school has recently been built at a short distance from the city, portions of the building being allocated to pupils from different areas, according to the donations received from these areas towards the building fund. A commendable feature of this institution is the assumption that most of the boys will in future have to earn their own livelihood. It seems also to be taken for granted that a fair proportion of them will in natural course settle down as ordinary householders. The explicit recognition of this fact would be of great value.

Some indication has already been given of the anomalous position in which the modern Panth finds itself in regard to the question of marriage. Dadu may or may not have regarded the celibate life as ideally the highest: the point is at least open to argument. It must be acknowledged at all events that the existence of a professedly celibate order which is not really celibate is a grave menace to the life of any community. The transition from a monastic life to that of a married householder,



especially in a caste-bound country like India, is admittedly beset with many practical difficulties.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the reabsorption into Hindu society of members of other monastic orders in comparatively recent years suggests that the difficulties are not insuperable. The important thing is the emphatic recognition of the sanctity of the institution of marriage. No more urgent problem confronts those who guide the counsels of the Panth to-day than that of restoring the home and family to its rightful place in the life of the community. The logical issue of this may well be the gradual elimination of the Dadu Panthis as an independent social group. Such an eventuality is the less to be regretted when it is remembered that it was never Dadu's intention to become the founder of a new religious sect or order. On that question the witness of the *Bani* is decisive. The extent of Dadu's influence, like that of his predecessor Kabir, is not to be measured by the mere continued existence centuries after his death of a Panth which still bears his name, or even by the rise of later sects such as the *Ram Snehi* (Lovers of Rama) and others in whose devotional literature the *Bani* of Dadu is given an honoured place. Dadu's life work can be rightly estimated only when it is viewed as part of a much larger movement, enriched from many sources, which in its totality has exerted an incalculable influence on the life of the common people.

There is no reason to doubt that the modern Dadu cult, centring in the temple worship at Naraina, will long survive, surrounded by a body of faithful adherents. A small company of Viraktas, voluntarily pledged to the monastic life, will maintain the tradition of celibacy. But, as regards its avowed mission as custodian of the "oracles" of Dadu, the Panth has clearly outlived its usefulness. Thanks to the wider publicity the publication of Dadu's works has given to his message, the *Bani* is no longer the exclusive possession of any sect or community. Indeed, apart from the superstitious reverence paid to it as an object of ritual worship, the *Bani* can hardly be said to hold a central place in the teaching and practice of the modern Panth.

There is the more reason to be grateful that, through all vicissitudes, the *Bani* itself has remained essentially unchanged.

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller discussion of these difficulties, see *Armed Religious Ascetics in Northern India*, pp. 19 ff.



To the pious industry and conscientiousness of its early editors we owe the preservation of this unimpeachable witness to the unwearied ardour of Dadu's quest of truth, his selfless love of his fellow men, his awe-stricken sense of the surpassing wonder of God's grace. It is such things as these that make good his title to a place of honour he never sought for himself in the religious annals of Rajasthan.

## Chapter Fourteen

### CONCLUSION

A HINDU scholar, confessedly no friend of the *bhakti* movement, once remarked to the writer that *bhakti* is "an exotic on Indian soil". To characterise as "exotic" a phase of belief and worship which has laid so powerful a hold on the hearts of the people of India and commanded the eager advocacy of such scholars as Ramanuja or the unknown author of the *Bhagavadgita*, will seem to many a flagrant misuse of terms. But the idea in the mind of the speaker was clear enough. What he sought to convey was that, in the great philosophic systems of India, there is no real place for the doctrine of *bhakti* at all.

It is true that the dominant school of Hindu thought not only tolerates but commends the worship of a personal God as a practical aid to the worshipper at a certain stage of his spiritual progress. But it is made clear that this is only a step towards the attainment of that higher knowledge in which the worshipper realises his identity with the Supreme Spirit, and the very idea of worship and fellowship is left behind. India has had its great theistic writers and founders of schools, but even the "modified monism" of Ramanuja, and the practical devotion of the *Gita*, have had to come to terms with such inviolable sacred texts as *tat tvam asi*—"thou art That"—and *aham Brahma asmi*—"I am Brahma". Again, there is the inescapable doctrine of *Karma*. "We seem never, even in the most theistic periods of Indian theistic aspiration, to escape from this conception—which, as Dr. Grierson has said, 'hangs like a pall' over all the *bhakti* teaching even of the North India saints".<sup>1</sup> Whatever reasons may be ascribed for this non-theistic or anti-theistic bias of Hindu thought, the fact itself is hardly open to dispute that, in the whole course of her religious history, India has never succeeded in evolving a self-consistent and well-grounded philosophy of theism.

<sup>1</sup> Macnicol, *Indian Theism*, p. 223. Cf. Rudolf Otto, *India's Religion of Grace*.

This is not in the least to deny the immense popularity of the *bhakti* schools, or the very profound influence they have exerted on the religious life of India. "Indian philosophy has reasoned out certain conclusions; its typical expression, ■ everyone knows, is the Vedanta; and no one would deny that even the thought of the illiterate has a pantheistic tinge. This has often been pointed out. Perhaps too much has been made of it. . . . If we study the folk-poets, and through them the mental outlook of the simple folk of India, we find vulgar thought often in absolute revolt from those findings of the philosophers so readily and dogmatically put forth in Europe as Indian belief. These are only one side of Indian belief."<sup>1</sup>

Historically, ■ has been already explained, the *bhakti* cults were of popular origin: their appeal was to the common man. For this reason they were little concerned with philosophic argument; their interests lay in other directions. Their primary aim was not to discipline the mind, but to nurture the devotional life. The school of thought to which they ostensibly belonged was simply that of the special sect from which they originated. One result of this comparative indifference to philosophical speculation was that, when the first strong devotional impulse had spent itself and the need of ■ formal statement of belief began to be felt, the tendency was always to fall back on ready-made formulæ, rather than to attempt to build up a reasoned and orderly system in harmony with their own distinctive outlook. From this point of view at least, *bhakti* has always been, and still remains, an "exotic on Indian soil". It has lived through the centuries on a borrowed philosophy, fundamentally alien to its own spirit and aspirations. The hitherto unchallenged *data* of Hindu speculation are the sunken rock on which every movement in the direction of a clear, uncompromising theism has finally made shipwreck.

How far these general comments on Indian theism are applicable to the teaching of Dadu the reader is now in a position to judge. In our account of the origin of the *Bani*, we have endeavoured to do justice to the many and varied sources from which its inspiration is drawn. In our study of Dadu's teaching, full emphasis has been laid on those features of his message

<sup>1</sup> Thomson and Spencer, *Bengali Religious Lyrics*, Introd., p. 21.

which seem to approach most nearly to the standpoint of Christian theism. But we have sought to avoid reading into the poems a "Christian" meaning which they do not bear.

There is no evidence in the *Bani* of any direct contact with Christian ideas. Of indirect contact, it is impossible to speak with the same certainty. Deeply influenced as he was both by the Hindu *bhakti* schools and by Sufism, Dadu would naturally share in any enrichment which Christianity may have brought to either or both of these.<sup>1</sup>

No great stress need be laid on the Emperor Akbar's professed interest in the Christian religion and on the presence of Jesuit missionaries at the Moghul court. It is doubtful how far the general public were greatly interested in the Emperor's study of non-Muslim faiths, except in as far as it affected his attitude to their own. Dadu did not move in court circles, and in any case would have been little attracted by the dogmatic type of belief represented by the Jesuit fathers. We must be content with the fact that, to the best of our knowledge, Dadu had no direct acquaintance with the teachings of Christianity. The presence in his poems of expressions that "have a Christian ring" about them is not in itself evidence of a borrowing from Christian sources. It may be no more than an evidence that "the hearts of men are everywhere very much the same", and that "God has spoken to both East and West in language that is akin".<sup>2</sup>

The Christian reader, as has already been said, will find much in the *Bani* which it is difficult to reconcile, not only with the Christian view of God, but even with Dadu's own dominant idea of a righteous and merciful Creator to whom the soul can surrender itself in utter trust and devotion. While frankly recognising this fact, he will not be disposed, in seeking to get to the heart of Dadu's message, to lay exaggerated emphasis upon it. He will welcome, rather, the many evidences of the *anima naturaliter christiana* which the *Bani* affords. It is interesting to speculate what Dadu's reaction would have been had he been brought into direct contact with the Christian message in its purity and power.

<sup>1</sup> The indebtedness of the Sufis to Christian mysticism is widely acknowledged. An interesting discussion of the possible influence of Christian ideas on the *bhakti* cults will be found in Macnicol's *Indian Theism*, Appendix C, pp. 272 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Macfie, *Ramayan of Tulsi Das*, p. 254.



In one respect, the Christian expositor may feel that he is in a position to do fuller justice to the theistic note in Dadu's teaching than one who, by tradition and training, moves in a different circle of ideas. He may easily fall short in his endeavour to interpret the Hindu or the Islamic elements in Dadu's thought. He is less liable to misinterpret those by no means exceptional utterances which might well have fallen from the lips of some Hebrew or Christian saint. It is with a measure of real insight that Mr. Tara Dutt Gairola has given to his little volume of selections the title *Psalms of Dadu*. If at times one feels that the term is not wholly applicable, there are instances in which it seems to be as felicitous as it would be inappropriate to the poems, say, of Kabir, or even of so wholehearted a disciple of Dadu as the poet Sundar Das. It is surely not without significance that Mr. Gairola, in his rendering of the poems selected, has been able to draw so freely on the vocabulary and idiom of the Authorised Version of the Hebrew Psalter, without doing violence to the meaning and spirit of the original.

Greater than the *Bani*, however, was the man Dadu himself. A man, says St. Paul, is accepted "according to that he hath, not according to that he hath not". It is in such a spirit of Christian reasonableness that we must seek to evaluate Dadu's life and work. As the mind travels back over those years of courageous witness and unwearied service of which so scanty a record remains, we think, not of the faulty tools with which he worked, but of the faithful use he made of them; not of the dubious categories he was often forced to employ, but of the deep truths of which they were made the vehicle; not of his debt to Hinduism or Islam or even (if it be so) all unconsciously to Christianity; but rather of his infinite debt to the Divine Master who in His great mercy laid His hand upon him and claimed him for His own.

## Appendix A

### THE FIFTY-TWO DISCIPLES OF DADU

BELOW is given a list (from Raghoji's *Bhaktamala*) of Dadu's fifty-two chief disciples, with the names of the *thambhas*, or settlements, with which they are associated. The location of *thambhas* not situated in Jaipur territory is indicated in brackets.

*Note.* The number fifty-two was no doubt suggested by the fifty-two *dwaras*, or temples, embraced by the seven Bairagi *akharas*. But many of the disciples are well-known as the actual founders of the *thambhas* named.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Thambha</i>
1. Garib Das . . . .	Naraina "
2. Miskin Das . . . .	Naraina
3. Sundar Das . . . .	Ghatra
4. Sundar Das . . . .	Fatchpur
5. Rajjab . . . .	Sanganer
6. Dayal Das . . . .	—
7. Mohan . . . .	Marol (Marwar)
8. Mohan . . . .	Asom (Marwar)
9. Mohan . . . .	—
10. Mohan . . . .	Motiwara (Alwar)
11. Jag Jiwan . . . .	Dausa
12. Jaggannath . . . .	Amber
13. Gopal . . . .	—
14. Gopal . . . .	—
15. Gopal . . . .	—
16. Garib Das . . . .	Andhi
17. Durjan Das . . . .	Idwa (Marwar)
18. Gharsi Das . . . .	Karail (Ajmer)
19. Jai Mal . . . .	Sambhar
20. Jai Mal . . . .	Kalar (Marwar)
21. Tejanand . . . .	Jodhpur (Marwar)
22. Paramanand . . . .	Indogli (Marwar)
23. Banwari Das . . . .	Ratiya (Hissar)
24. Hari Das . . . .	Ranila (Hissar)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Thambha</i>
25. Sadhu Ram . . . .	Mandota (Panjab)
26. Hari Das . . . .	—
27. Kapil Muni . . . .	Gundor
28. Chaturbhuja . . . .	Rampur (Bareilly)
29. Chatur Das . . . .	Kaladera
30. Chatur Das . . . .	Singrawat (Marwar)
31. Charan Das . . . .	Chhaondiya
32. Prayag Das . . . .	Didwana (Marwar)
33. Chain Ram . . . .	Kanota
34. Chain Ram . . . .	—
35. Prahlad Das . . . .	Ghâtra (Alwar)
36. Bakhna . . . .	Naraina (tomb)
37. Jagga . . . .	Broach
38. Lal Das . . . .	Pranpitan (Gujerat)
39. Makhu Das . . . .	Gangaicha (Kotah)
40. Tila . . . .	Phumphliya
41. Chanda . . . .	Naraina
42. Hari Singh . . . .	Vidyad (Marwar)
43. Narayan Das . . . .	Nagal
44. Jasa . . . .	—
45. Jhanjhu . . . .	Jotwara
46. Banjhu . . . .	Jotwara
47. Sant Das . . . .	—
48. Tiku Das . . . .	Nagal
49. Shyam Das . . . .	Jalana
50. Madhu Das . . . .	Gular (Marwar)
51. Nagar . . . .	Tahatra
52. Nizam . . . .	Tahatra

*N.B.* The lists vary slightly in some details, which are not of great importance. But in the *Bhaktamala* the “two sisters” were evidently included in the “fifty-two”.

## Appendix B

### MAHANTS OF NARAINA

<i>Name of Mahant</i>	<i>Date of Death</i>	
	<i>Vikrama Era</i>	<i>A.D.</i>
Garib Das . . . . .	1693	1636
Miskin Das . . . . .	1705	1648
Faqir Das . . . . .	1750	1693
Jait Ram . . . . .	1789	1732
Kishan Dev . . . . .	1810	1753
Chain Ram . . . . .	1837	1780
Nirbhay Ram . . . . .	1871	1814
Jiwan Das . . . . .	1877	1820
Dalai Ram . . . . .	1897	1840
Prem Das . . . . .	1901	1844
Narayan Das . . . . .	1912	1855
Udai Ram . . . . .	1931	1874
Gulab Das . . . . .	1948	1891
Harji Ram . . . . .	1955	1898
Daya Ram . . . . .	1988	1931
Ram Lal . . . . .	2001	1944
Prakash Das (present occupant of the <i>gaddi</i> )		



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